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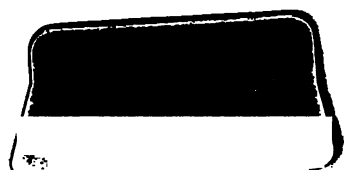
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OLD
TRUTHS
IN
NEW
LIGHTS.







OLD TRUTHS IN NEW LIGHTS.





OLD TRUTHS IN NEW LIGHTS.

A SERIES

OF

SUNDAY-SCHOOL ADDRESSES.

By W. H. S.



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TO THE
SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS OF ENGLAND,
MY CO-WORKERS
IN THE MOST INTERESTING AND PRODUCTIVE FIELD OF
LABOUR WHICH THE CHURCHES OFFER,
AND WHOSE DUTIES,
IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN MOVEMENTS, MUST BE
INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT,

Their Methods

OF IMPARTING TRUTH TO CHILDREN,
ARE PRAYERFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY

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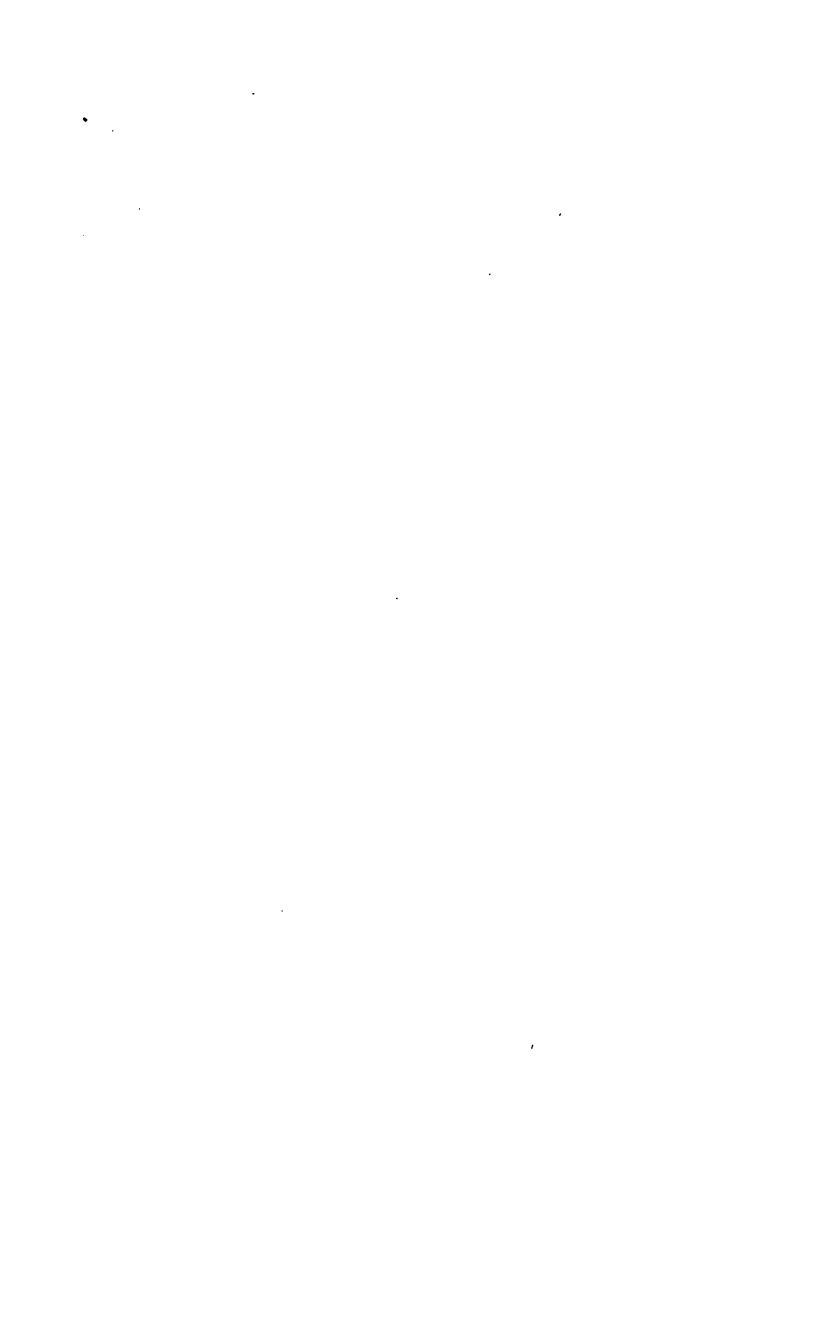
OF IMPARTING TRUTH TO CHILDREN,
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OLD TRUTHS IN NEW LIGHTS.

OUR FATHER ABOVE:

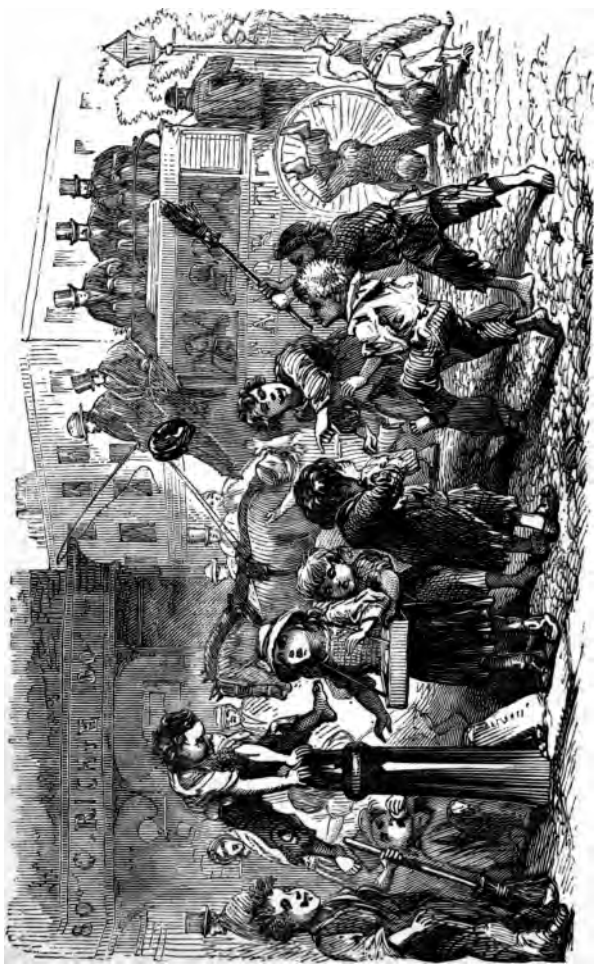
UNDERSTANDING AND PROTECTING HIS CHILDREN.

I.

"Our Father Which art in heaven."—MATTHEW vi. 9.



WE want a father in the world. In how many homes do the children miss in the morning a firm footstep on the stairs! And in the evening they look round for him who used to take them on his knee! How they rock themselves in their first sorrow, and cry, "Where is father?" There are above thirty thousand children in London without homes. Every morning, as they steal out from the arches or from under the waggons where they have been sleeping, without a farthing in their hands, and without a friend in the world, they seem to say, "Where is father?" God is our Father. Yes, where is the Father of all the fatherless and motherless but in heaven? These poor children of the streets may not know it. None have taught them that God is their Father. There was a time, perhaps, when *you* were ill of fever, and then you stared about you, and did not know him who stood at the pillow, and smoothed your hot brows. You could not tell your father. So it is with these children. Sin has put them into a fever, and they do not know their Father in heaven; it is night with them, and they do not see their Father's face. For all the *poor, neglected children* in the world there is a Father—there



must be. He—our Father above, I mean—sends His friends to these outcast children, and makes them love them in their dirt and rags. At a meeting of the “Children’s Home,” London, a few months ago, Mr. Bernardo, one of the city missionaries, told this story:—

There was room for six boys in one of these Children’s Homes, and he had been asked to choose the boys from the streets. He set out, but not in the daylight, when the boys are tumbling after the omnibuses for ha’pence, or sweeping the mud from the street crossings. He started at night, one cold winter’s night, when the shops were all closed, and the street cries silent, and the gas-lights flickered dimly in the wind. He went to Billingsgate market, and found his way under the low, damp roofs, stirring among the barrels and boxes. He stopped at the side of a large crate, covered with a tarpaulin. There were one or two boys from the “Home” with him, who were “pretty fly,” as they called it, and knew the place. They lifted up the tarpaulin. What a sight of matted hair and pinched faces, of thin arms and bare breasts! There were seventy-one boys huddled in that crate. Their breathing seemed short and stifled, but they did not wake. The visitors called, and moved their lantern over them, but there was no one who started up.

“Promise ’em a ha’penny apiece,” said one of the lads from the Home.

“Look out, here’s a ha’penny each for you,” shouted the missionary.

That was enough. The sleepy heads shook, and there was a scramble for the coppers. The missionary selected six of the boys, and among those he refused to take was a lad who was known by the name “Carrots.” He recollected the boy, and a short time afterwards asked a policeman at the market what had become of him.

“O!” said the officer, “a few mornings ago, early, one of the porters was going to move a hogshead when he found two boys inside. One got up, and scrambled out. The other didn’t move, so the porter put in his arms and lifted him up, but found him dead. That was little ‘Carrots.’”

How many boys would die like that if our Father in heaven did not care for them, and teach men to open “Homes” and

"Refuges" for them! Jesus was poor, homeless, and friendless—why? On purpose that He might feel how much the world needed a father, and that when He went back to His glorious home in heaven, He might never forget how starved, and miserable, and helpless they were on earth. It was He taught us to pray, "Our Father Which art in heaven."

There are several things about our Father above that I wish you never to forget.

I. OUR HEAVENLY FATHER UNDERSTANDS US.

Who can tell best what the infant wants when it stretches out its hands and tries to speak—who but the mother? Others might mistake what the child wants, but the mother does not, because she has always been watching and noticing it. Do you think that God, Who has always been looking at and studying you, does not understand you? Some in this world are dumb, and cannot speak. Does God understand these? Yes. There are hundreds of different languages in the world. Can God tell what the Laplander says, kneeling down in his furs? Can He understand the Caffre boy who lies on his mat and prays, while the hot sunshine steals into his kraal? Yes. The flowers that lift up their painted heads, and the grasses that wave, have no tongues. They never call for rain which they want to drink, or sunshine which helps them to their food out of the air. Yet God knows what they want, and He always sends it. God understands us too. At once He knows if we try to draw near to Him. Your father and mother may not know what makes you sad sometimes, what makes you quiet and thoughtful after school or after service. God knows. He knows you are thinking of your sin against Him, and He is bending over to help you. The people could not tell whatever that wretched, thin woman meant when she struggled through the crowd to Jesus, and then did nothing but touch His dress. But Jesus understood it all, and when she stooped down and touched, she felt strength coming back to her.

Some years ago, a little boy was taken by the hand into a workhouse. He had fallen from a ladder when helping his father, who was a bricklayer, and the fall had so injured him *that he was quite deaf and could scarcely speak. He had lain at home for weeks.* He had managed to say, "Why don't you *speak to me?*" and they had written on a slate, "You are

deaf." He had called for books, and they found him none. They did not seem to understand or to love him as they should have done. Now the workhouse door had shut behind him, and he had to settle down among rude, stupid boys, who grinned at his pale face and his timid manner. He prayed alone, he worked alone. I had forgotten, One was with him—our Father above. *He* understood everything. He found him friends who spoke kindly to him and lent him books. After the boy had left the workhouse, a gentleman made a companion of him, and they travelled together in the East. One of them wrote several books about Eastern customs and scenes in order to illustrate the Bible. It was the workhouse boy, who became *Dr. Kitto*.

God understands us. He can tell what our feeblest cry means. He knows why the tears gather. He hears every sigh. He answers every prayer.

II. OUR HEAVENLY FATHER PROTECTS US.

Were you ever told how the birds protect their young? There is a common English bird that builds its nest on the



Eastern Merchants.

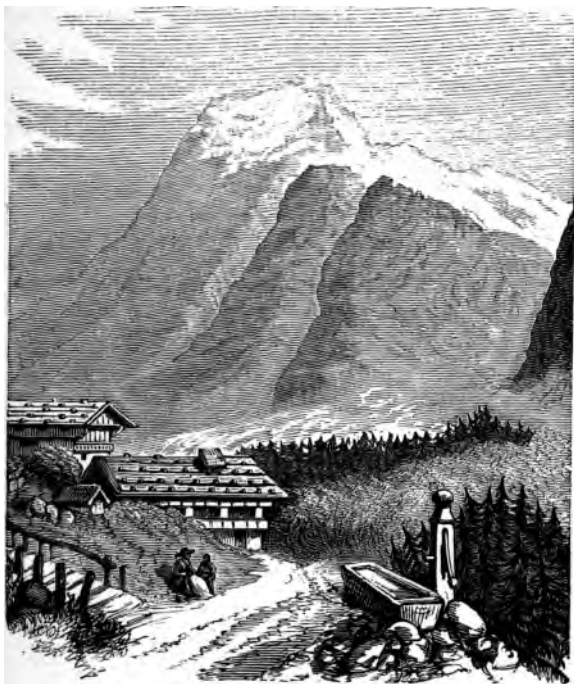
ground. Let a sportsman walk towards the nest, and the old bird will flutter round in the greatest distress. It will fly off in another direction, and drop down into another tuft of grass, in order to lead the visitor from its nest. If this does not succeed, the bird will act lame, and go limping along to draw the sportsman after it. It will even fly in front of the gun, and tempt the sportsman to shoot it, rather than its young should be discovered. Recollect God taught the bird these habits ; and do you think God would not feel for you and protect you, " who are of more value than many sparrows ? "

Merchants in the East who carry valuable things, gold, and spices, and silks, always take soldiers with them whose guns are slung across their shoulders. You who love God are like these merchants. You have valuables with you. You have kind hearts and pleasant tempers—are not these valuable ? There are those who will try to rob you of them. They will annoy you, and then your good temper is stolen. You want some one always to stand by you, always to defend you. God is that One.

Here is a poor lad without father or mother—an apprentice boy, who has been sailing with a cruel captain and a wicked crew. Although a quiet, obedient boy, he has been starved and beaten, he has been knocked from mast to mast, and from fore to aft. During a long voyage he almost wondered where God was Whom he tried to love. Now cast off by his savage captain, he lies out in the hot sun on a low bank at a West Indian port, his head aching with fever. You say surely God has forgotten to protect this boy. See, the master of another ship comes up, looks into his face with pitying eyes, takes him carefully to his own vessel, and treats and pays him well. The poor boy works upward, and in years after he is a great English shipowner. No wonder he founded a home for distressed children. God will protect.

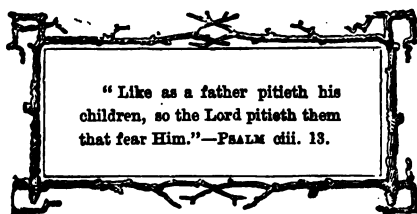
I have read, if I am not mistaken, a touching story from Switzerland. Many of the villages lie just below the snows of huge mountains. From one village to another the path sometimes leads up beyond the dark pine-trees out among the snows, on the steep sides of the mountain, where the goats tread carefully. It was along such a path that a mother one day started, *carrying her infant*. She had left her warm fireside and her *spinning-wheel*, for her business was urgent. Now she was

winding about where the mountain stream ran among the icicles, far above the sounds of the village. A storm overtook her. How the wind howled through the pass! how the snow hissed round them! Because the wind chilled the child, and the snow was blinding it, the mother tore off her shawl and



wrapped up the infant. Still the snow came in sheets, and the cold pierced. It took but a minute for the mother to snatch off her skirt and add it to the bundle out of which came the little stifled cry. The mother struggled on a few more steps, and *then she sank down*, with no more strength than to hug the child closer. A few hours after, when the storm had cleared

off, they found them in the snow-drift. The mother was bent over the bundle, but her arms were cold and stiff. Her eyes, that would never be opened again, were fringed with frost. But the child! the child *lived*. They took off the wrappers, one by one, which the mother had used to protect it, and underneath all the child gently stirred. This is very touching, but Jesus did more than that to protect us. Sin was smiting us down, was chilling, was killing us, when Jesus stood pitying by our side. To cover us, to protect us, what did He lose? He threw off His glory; but that was not enough. He parted with one thing after another, but still the storm beat, and He could hear our sobs. He has put round us the last garment He wore, and the winds still pierce. He falls, He dies! But taken out of His arms, from His warm breast, look! we live. O, how our Father in heaven protects us!



OUR FATHER ABOVE :

LOVING AND GUIDING HIS CHILDREN.

II.



COULD talk to you for many Sundays about "our Father above," but I will only ask you to think of two other ways in which He shows Himself to you.

III. OUR HEAVENLY FATHER LOVES US.

Some of you know what it is to have a very loving earthly parent. If you should be missing, how many miles do you think your father would walk after you? How many hours' sleep do you think he would take until he found you? To the end your father will love you. His heart will go out to you when you have grown into men and women. Ay, when you stand round his bed for the last time, his eyes shall grow dim when they are fixed on you. His hands shall grow cold when they are stretched out towards you, his lips shall close when they are blessing you. "If God is fonder of me than my father is, I cannot help loving Him," you are ready to say. Why, it was God that made your father as fond as he is, and do you think God left Himself without love to you?

What shall I say to those children who never talk fondly about their parents, who would rather say nothing about them? They never have one to twine their curls about his fingers, to bend over their slates and put their sums right, to read to them in the long evenings, and to walk with them to service on Sunday mornings. Who is father to them? Can this fellow be their father who is coming blundering upstairs past midnight, whilst *their mother* hides away in their room, saying in a *whisper*, "*He's coming!*"



A man came to a person I know, not long ago, about a dog he had missed, and what do you think he said? "I'd sooner ha' lost one o' my own children than that 'ere pup."

The most touching story I think I ever read is told by Mr. Ashworth in one of his "Strange Tales." He says:—

"We entered the most dirty, miserable home I ever beheld in my life, and that is saying a great deal. In one corner of this wretched room down-stairs, there was something called a bed, consisting of filthy straw, covered over with filthier rags. Amongst these lay a young sickly lad, almost worn to a skeleton; his head hung down at one end, for he had no pillow, nor anything higher than the straw on which he lay. The old woman led me near the bed, crying, 'Come here, come here! God bless thee, my child; but thou art a poor object!' Then

turning to me she said, 'See, Mr. Ashworth, this lad, little as he looks, is fourteen years old. He hurt the spine of his back by falling down the stairs several years since; he is a poor suffering creature; he never lies in the right place in bed or out, his pain is so great. All the clothing he had was a pair of trousers: he rolled them up for a pillow, to lay his weary head on; but his mother is on the fuddle, and she has taken the child's trousers and popped them for drink. Poor thing!' . . .

"Little Tommy looked me in the face, with a look of pain, sorrow, and fear; and with tears in his eyes said, 'Mr. Ashworth, will you tell my mother that I did not tell you about the trousers? You know they were not worth much: and I want you to say that I did not tell you she had sold them.'

"'But why do you wish me to say to your mother you have not told me, Tommy?'

"'Why, because she will abuse me; I know she will. Do say I did not tell you.'

"'Yes, my lad, I can truly say that, for you have not told me. Is there anything I can do for you, Tommy?'

"For a few moments he looked at me, evidently full of something he was anxious to say, and at last said, in a whisper, 'Will you talk to me about Jesus Christ?' . . .

"In a moment I was seated on the broken chair beside his bed, talking with Tommy about the love of Jesus.

"'Do you think He will take me to heaven soon, Mr. Ashworth? for I want to go, I am so weary.'

"'Do you love Jesus, Tommy, my child?'

"'Yes, Sir, I think I do. Does He love me?'

"'Yes, I am sure He does, if you love Him. And if you love Him, and pray to Him to make you ready for heaven, He will hear your prayers and make you very happy, even on your sick bed.'

"Just then the mother came staggering in, and walking up to the bed, looked me in the face with a fierce, fiendish look, saying, 'I do not thank you for coming here.' . . .

"I returned the stern look, at the same time saying, 'What have you done with your Tommy's trousers? You have taken them from under his head, and pawned them for drink.'

"She cast a terrible look at the poor sick child. He saw the look, and trembled with fear; but I soon set him right by

saying, 'Tommy did not tell me, and he begged I would say to you that he had not told me. An old woman up the street, that brought me in to look at him, told me. How much have you pawned them for?'

"For some time she would not speak, but at last gruffly said, 'sixteen pence.'

"'Well, here is seventeen pence, go and fetch them back, and I will wait till you return.'

"When the mother returned, she rolled up the trousers, and rather roughly placed them under his head; but it was evident he was greatly afraid of her; and when I took my leave of him, asking him if I might call again, he durst not speak, but his eyes said, 'Yes.'

"When I got home I sent a new shirt for the sick lad, for he told me he had but one, and it wanted washing; and soon after I called again to see Tommy, to talk with him about Jesus. I found him still very weak, and greatly suffering. Yes, and I found his head again hanging down the end of his straw bed, for his mother had again pawned his pillow from under his head for drink!'

The Scriptures say a mother may forget her child, but they tell you "the Lord will not forget." Let the child among you who has the best and most affectionate father, think of him. Is that father gentle? Then your Father above is more gentle. Is he patient? Then your Heavenly Father is more patient. Is he forgiving? Then God is more forgiving. "O, how He loves!"

I want you further to recollect that—

IV. OUR HEAVENLY FATHER GUIDES US.

Suppose you were told to go to a house miles away, which you had never before seen. The road, they said, was across some meadows and a common, and past a mill, and through a farmyard. How astonished you would stand! You would say, "I was never there before; somebody may direct me wrong; the night is coming on; won't you walk with me a mile or two?"

We are asked to go to heaven. They say the road is straight. *Ah! not so straight that we cannot miss it. Some of you have missed it already. Many have gone out of the road, and others*

stand at the corners, pointing after them, and saying, "This is the way." You are half-puzzled; you scarcely know which is the right way, and whom you should follow. But your Heavenly Father comes to your help. Have you not heard Him say, "This is the way, walk ye in it?" Will He be your Guide all through? Yes. "I am with you always."

A mother one day spoke to her boy, "I want you to sing 'Happy Land' to me, dear."

The boy sang on till he came to this verse,—

"Bright in that happy land
Beams every eye;
Kept by a Father's hand,
Love cannot die."

"What do you mean, my dear, by those words, 'Kept by a Father's hand?' " asked the mother.

"Why, Mamma, when I am in the street with my father, and we come to the broken stones and bad places in the pavement, I just catch hold of father's hand, and he helps me over safely. He said I should find rougher places than that in the path of life; but if I loved the Lord, and trusted in Him, He would always help me over them."

The boy was right. There will be rough places in the way to heaven, where some one should pick the way for you. Won't you want your Heavenly Father then? There will be dangerous places, where others have fallen. O, for a Father's hand then. Let me hear you singing,—

"The way is dark, my Father! Cloud upon cloud
Is gathering thickly o'er my head, and loud
The thunders roar above me; see I stand
Like one bewilder'd! Father, take my hand,
And through the gloom lead safely home,
Safely home, safely home,
Lead safely home Thy child!

"The way is long, my Father! and my soul
Longs for the rest and quiet of the goal;
While yet I journey through this weary land,
Keep me from wandering, Father; take my hand,
And in the way to endless day,
Endless day, endless day,
Lead safely on Thy child!

"The path is rough, my Father! Many a thorn
Has pierced me; and my feet, all torn

And bleeding, mark the way. Yet thy command
 Bids me press forward. Father, take my hand!
 Then safe and blest, O, lead to rest,
 Lead to rest, lead to rest,
 O lead to rest Thy child!"

"But how does God guide?" you ask me. You cannot feel God's hand, you cannot see Him. He guides by directions and by His Spirit. There are no roads across the ocean; there are no finger-posts on the billows; yet the vessels keep in certain lines, and they steer off the sands and the rocks. You know how it is. The captains all have charts, on which every reef and rock and bank is marked, where ships might perish, and they work according to the map.

A bold but a self-willed old captain was sailing in the Mediterranean, taking the English ambassador to Naples. A dangerous little sunken rock was marked on the chart, but the captain had never been able to find it. Now as they were getting near it he said they should call him a "lubber" if he did not take his ship right over it. "There! we've just passed it," laughed the old man, and the words were scarcely uttered when there was a horrible lurch, and the ship's timbers were shivered on the rock. He should have heeded the chart.

The Bible is God's chart, made up for us. It shows where you may not go, what you may not do. It is marked "safe" here, and "dangerous" yonder. Read the Chart, study the Chart; that will guide you.

Many a boy has gone out from his father's cottage in the country to a situation in the city, where his father could not follow him and watch him. Away from home, with nobody to help him, nobody to set him right, how glad the boy has been to get a letter from the old place. Perhaps one of them read like this:—

"MY DEAR SON,—I am afraid you must feel very strange and lonely where you are. We miss you every day, and your mother and Annie never see any one push open the garden-gate without wishing it might be you. But you are getting your own living now like a man, are you not? because you knew how awkward it was for us, and how ill I had been. At Christmas we shall see you, I hope, if it's only for a day or two. They have already been counting how many weeks it *will be*, and thinking of what they shall get ready for you, and

wondering if any of the roses have gone from your face. My dear lad, I am afraid you will be tempted to bet, to smoke, to drink, and perhaps to go to places where you would not like your mother and myself to follow. Do not give way to the temptations. You would hardly like to see us at Christmas if you had been going wrong. Look up to your father's God. Look to your Saviour Jesus, Who 'gave Himself for you,' and make Him your bosom Companion.

"Your ever affectionate Father."

That father may be dead now, but the boy cannot forget the letter. He turns it up sometimes from the bottom of his box, and as he looks at the fingered pages, a lump swells in his throat, and he wipes away a tear with his coat-sleeve. He never bet a copper after receiving that letter, the next Sunday morning found him at the Sunday-school, and not long after Jesus found him kneeling at His feet. See how the letter guided him.

You and I have received a letter from our Father above. How many hands have handled it! In it you can read all about your Father's love, and your Father's house, and what they are preparing for you yonder. That letter is the Bible. O! for the long holiday in your Father's house! where you will never be sent out again into a cold world! Perhaps a sister is there already, and God is telling her how many weeks or years she must wait until you join her. I think you feel some warmth towards your "Father above." Draw nearer, into His arms, and say, "Thou art the Guide of my youth." Amen.



GOD OUR SUN.



MEANING of Scripture words.—God like the sun.—(1.) The sun gives life—Nothing lives in a cavern—Men in dungeons—Insects “children of the sun”—Death without the sun—

God gives life—Lazarus and Jairus’ daughter—A brother ill—The world without God—God makes souls live.—(2.) The sun gives light—Sunrise in the country and town—

The sun always shining—God gives light—“Buy the light”—Heathens “sit in darkness”—Pierre the hunter—Pray for the light—A boy drowned.—(3.) The sun gives beauty—Sunrise and sunset—The light paints the flowers—God gives beauty—The portrait-taker—A loveable youth on the battle-field.

GOD OUR SUN.

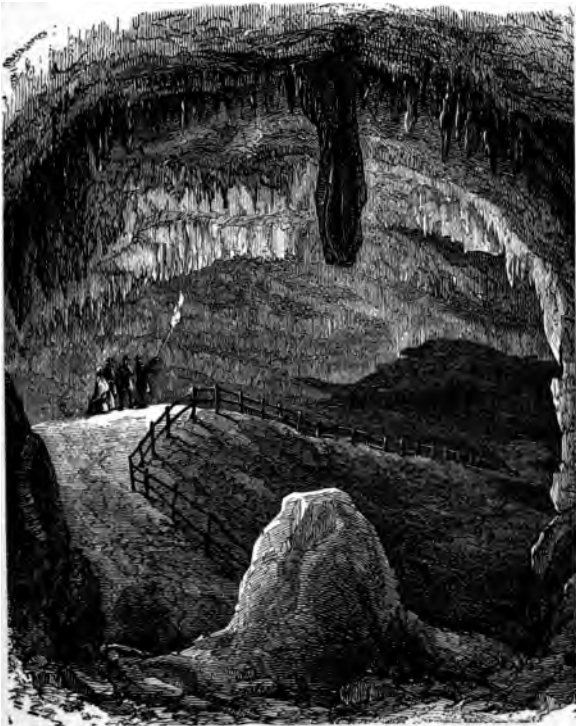
“The Lord God is a sun.”—PSALM lxxxiv. 11. “I am the Light of the world.”—JOHN viii. 12.

SUPPOSING you were looking at a picture of a girl with rosy colour and smiling features, you would most likely say, “what a sweet face.” You would not think that was really a face—you would mean it was just like a sweet face. The Bible often speaks in this way. David told God “Thou hast been a strong tower.” He did not mean God had been a tower, only that He had protected him as much as a tower would have done. David said “the Lord God is a sun;” Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world.” You see what David and Jesus meant—that God was like the sun. Let me try to show you in what way God is our sun.

I. THE SUN GIVES LIFE.

Nothing lived in the world till the sun came. The sun

brought after it the grass, and the trees, and the flowers. Scarcely anything can live in a cavern where there is no sun. Have you ever been in a cavern? How damp it is! how it chills you! how barren it is! When you passed under that



arch you left the flowers outside. The trees, the mosses that grew at the mouth of the cavern, would not pass down into it. No, they ran away from it, they raised themselves up to the light. Nothing lives inside. I have indeed heard of little fish *living miserably* in the water of some caves, but what do you

think? they were stone blind! In these dark chambers you may hold your candle up to the damp rocks or down to the black ground, but you can see nothing alive, not even a worm or an insect. You cannot find a violet, or primrose, or daisy, nor a bed of moss, nor a blade of grass. They say that tadpoles never grow to be frogs where the water is very dark and shaded. When they put men in dungeons, where the light never comes, excepting through a small grate which the cobwebs have almost covered, they soon sicken, and waste, and die. If you carry away your geranium and fuschia and put them down in the cellar in the summer-time, will they live? No. Place your trees in the cupboard, will they live? No. But bring them to the window, set them there, and how they will stretch out their branches to the sun, and open their blossoms. You have often strolled past a still pool or a ditch in the hot July days, and had some trouble to beat away the clouds of little gnats and flies that followed you. Those thousands of winged things were not alive early that morning. The sun at mid-day shone hotly on the water and hatched those creatures, and up they flew into the air. When the sun left at night, and the cool breezes came up, those thousands of busy little things fell dead. They were the children of the sun. Let the sun be blotted out, and all things would die. The grass would die, the flowers would perish, the corn would refuse to grow. There would be no herbage for the cattle, no corn for us. Men, animals, flowers, fruits, all would perish; nothing would live.

God gives life.—Martha and Mary thought so; did they not,



when Lazarus rose out of the tomb and stood in the garden-walk, and rubbed out of his eyes the sleep of death? The friends of the young lady at Capernaum thought so; did they not, when they saw the girl that had died, eating a comfortable supper? Did you never have a brother

ill at home, so ill that you used to shut the doors quietly, and walk about on tip-toes, and gather round the doctor when he

came downstairs? Then, when you heard your brother talk foolish things, and heard the doctor say, "I have done all that can be done for him," when you felt some dreadful shadow was going over the house—then did not you kneel down and ask God to spare your brother? Did not you feel that, after all, God gave life? I have talked about what would happen if there should be no sun. What would happen if there could be no God? Why, there would be no voice to speak about it; no hand to write about it. Death would be everywhere. He who makes the air healthy instead of poisonous, would have gone. He who keeps the seas within their bounds, would be no more. Worse than this, if we had no God, there would be no one to make souls live. I may speak to you about heaven, and you may not be glad. I may tell you of Jesus' death, and you may not feel sorry. I may beg you to come to Jesus, and you may not be moved. Why? Because your souls are dead. God only can give life. He only can make your hearts feel and stir. Pray Him to do so.

II. THE SUN GIVES LIGHT.

The lark springs up from her nest and shakes out her dewy feathers; the cows open their quiet gray eyes; the sheep are stirring and the sheep-bells are tinkling. What is the matter? The day has dawned, the sun has come, and is lifting his great red fingers in the east. How bright! how full! how pure is the light of the sun! It steals everywhere. Into the narrow dirty courts of the city, through the filthy beer-shops, past the broken window-panes, down into the damp cellars it flings itself. The poor needle-woman who has been wearing her fingers away to the bone during the night, at the coming of the light puts out her candle. The sick child who has been watching for the brightness through many weary hours, smiles faintly, when she says, "It's come." Recollect the sunlight never ceases. You look round on a dull, cloudy morning and say, "There is no sun to-day." You make a great mistake. The clouds only hide the sun. They rise up from the earth. They are vapours that the rivers and the seas give off, and they pass between us and the sun. Four or five miles high, beyond all the clouds, the sun ever shines. Men who sail in balloons *often rise above the clouds into the clear, cool sunshine.* They

see something dark moving after them on the clouds below : it is the shadow of the balloon which the sun throws. The sun is the great lamp at which other lamps are lighted. It would be too long a story, or I could prove to you that every light we get, from a match, or a candle, or a fire, or the gas, comes from the sun. Yes, the sun is the "father of lights."

God gives light.—In Naples, five or six years ago, you might have heard a singular cry in the streets, and on the beautiful walk by the sea. Some clean, well-behaved boys were passing through the crowds with trays hanging before them filled with books, and as they would lift a book over their heads they would cry, "Buy the light," "Buy the light." Those books brought light with them, they were Bibles. In Naples it is sunnier than in England; the sky is brighter and the day is longer. They did not want more sunlight: they needed God's light.

The Bible says of every nation without God, that it is "sitting in darkness." The poor Hindoos a few years ago had a terrible funeral ceremony. When a husband died, they would lay his body on logs of wood. At nightfall his widow would be brought from home, and compelled to lie side by side with the dead body. When the wood was kindled, the dead man and the living woman would both be wrapped in the flames, with the din of gongs and the shouts of relatives! How these people were "sitting in darkness!" Yonder in China if a man wants to be persuaded he shall go to heaven, what do you think he must do? He must lay his arm down while the yellow-robed priests burn off a hand or a finger! "Sitting in darkness!" O, for the "Light of the World!" Without Him we perish.

We are like an Alpine hunter of whom I was reading. None were so bold, so keen-eyed, so strong-nerved as Pierre. He seldom started from home and turned his face to the mountains with his rifle over his shoulder, without bringing back a good chamois. One night when the sun had gone down and the chamois had been secured, Pierre was among the mountains, a long distance from home. The cold was intense, the winds rose and moaned about him. If he stayed he would freeze to death. "Over the jagged rocks he went as fast as his heavy load would allow him. But darkness came on fast. He knew he had one awful chasm between two mountains to pass over. It was hundreds

and hundreds of feet deep, and about twenty feet across. He knew that at a particular spot one single log had been thrown as a bridge. He knew that over that log he must cross with his load on his back. He knew, too, that through this chasm the wind rushed very fiercely. He knew that he must find the log and get over it, or he would perish with cold. When it became dark, he crouched down and lighted his little lamp. What was his horror to find that he had but one single match! A single gust of wind might put out his lamp, and then——! So he hung it to a string and let it down near the ground, to be 'a lamp to his feet.' Step by step he went, holding his little lamp most carefully; for if that failed, he must perish. At last he came to the chasm, and after a long search, found the log. It was a small, smooth spruce log. And how loudly and fearfully the winds moaned and groaned through the chasm! A single strong gust would put out the lamp, and then——! Pierre offered one short, earnest prayer, and laid himself on the log, to creep over. Slowly, almost breathlessly, he crept along on the log; the winds blew, the little flame flickered and wavered, as life and death hung on it. But he kept moving slowly, carefully, and got over! How joyfully, how thankfully he rose up, and felt that he was safe! When—whew! a horrible gust of wind came, and his lamp was out! And now he must die! perish in the cold! No! he raised his eyes, and saw the dawn of day peering over the mountains. He leaped for joy; and in a few moments the day opened, and the 'day-star,' the sun, was up! He was saved."

Believe me, children, there are some of you like Pierre, moving amongst dangers. It is night, and you are away from God. It is dark up there, and cold. If you have formed a bad habit, you are coming near the precipice. If you have found bad companions, you are drawing to the dangerous abyss. You do not mean to walk on blindly and fall! Then pray for the light, cry for the daybreak. It shall come more quickly than the morning came to Pierre. There was first a little white mist in the east, and then a gray band, and then a golden flush, before the sun rose. You need not wait so long for Jesus. Do you want Him? do you say softly, "Come, Lord?" Then He is here. "I am the Light of the world," He cries; and as He comes He shows the dangers in which you are standing, and carries you to the safe and pleasant paths of religion. I told

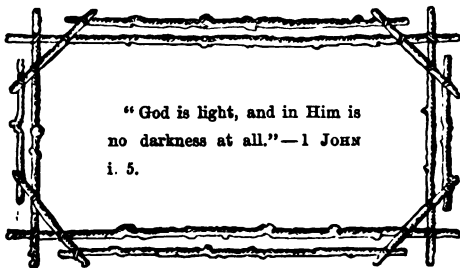
you that the sun was always shining, although you could not see it for the clouds. A boy went out the other day from home on an errand. He was told not to stay or to play. He disobeyed his father, he stayed to have a game, and lost his parcel. Afraid to go home, he wandered about till he came to a canal, where he threw himself in, and was drowned. Poor boy! His disobedience rose up like a black cloud before him. He forgot that God was shining all the time behind it, wanting to pardon him. And whenever we are miserable, and cannot see God, we should remember that it is only our sins and doubts which are in the way. God is above them all, ready to help.

III. THE SUN GIVES BEAUTY.

Who can describe sunrise? I have seen a picture of the bringing home of the Ark of God from the Philistines. The wagon had just come into sight along the hill-side, and the sun was just getting up behind it. The light seemed to fall off the Ark like flakes, the heads of the oxen that drew it seemed illuminated, and the spears of the men that guarded it glistened like silver. How beautiful, too, is the sunset! Sometimes the sun goes down like a great red globe, and the clouds draw black bars in front of him, as if they would hide him while he retires from our curious eyes. Sometimes when he is stealing away he paints a cloud with fire, which reminds you of that strange pillar which went sailing in the sky before the Israelites across the hot desert. The sun gives beauty. The sunshine is full of colours. Take a three-cornered piece of glass, and as the sun falls upon it there will be beautiful colours on the wall at the back. The glass caught the white sunlight, and brought out its colours, violet and red, green and yellow. It is the sun that paints all the flowers. It makes the lily white, the violet blue, the rose crimson. It stripes the tulip, and it tinges the dahlia. Yes, the sun gives beauty.

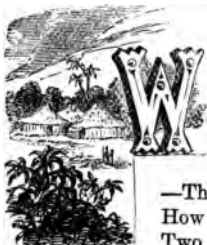
God gives beauty.—All beauty of character comes from God. Have you never heard somebody say, "What a change has come over that boy! He is kind and obedient as he never used to be!" The lad had prayed till God's light had come round him, and you saw how it was improving him! The square of white glass lies still in the portrait-taker's instrument—the light falls—one, two, three, eight or ten are counted, and it is over. The

portrait has been taken, and will cover over the glass. Give yourselves into Jesus' hands; let Him take you, and He will make your character so charming that your friends will be astonished. A Sunday-school lad of seventeen, whose mother was a widow, and who was a dear pious fellow, lay faint and bleeding on the ground after one of the battles between the Northern and Southern armies in America. The minister was called to the youth, and found that a rifle-ball had crushed up the bone of his leg, which must be taken off. At this, the youth said, "Chaplain, won't you ask God to sustain mother? I'm all she's got, and I'm afraid it will go hard with her; and then, Chaplain, won't you please pray that I shan't be left to say or do anything to dishonour Jesus?" The leg was cut off. In the night, as he tossed about with pain, he was heard to say, "Dear Lord, don't leave me! Dear Jesus, help me! don't let me say anything wrong. Ah! that hurts—*please* help." The youth had been the drummer in the regiment. For three years he had led a pious life, and had spoken to many a dying man. God had beautified his character, so that in death, as in life, he was lovely.



SEEING GOD IN HIS WORKS.

ADDRESSES TO BIBLE-CLASS SCHOLARS.



I.

WHAT wonderful things men can do!
 — The traveller in the west — The uninhabited city—God's works (first) in our own bodies—The world an exhibition—Small animals and plants —The stars—the world —Two miracles—How the air is mixed—The water freezing—Two objections answered.

SEEING GOD IN HIS WORKS.

"He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see? . . . He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not He know?"—PSALM xciv. 9, 10.

CHILDREN, what wonderful things men are able to do. A man can make a machine that will cut round things square, and square things round; that will pare off iron and steel more easily than you could whittle a stick. A man can make engines that will push a great and noble ship through as rough a storm "as ever wind did blow;" engines that will obey a touch, and yet carry a thousand men swiftly under mountains and over rivers. A man may make known his wants two thousand miles off in a moment or two of time, by means of a dead wire which lies among the rotting treasures of the deep sea. And if all the rest of men could happen to be absent, you could not walk about and see ships and docks, cities and railroads, without saying, "Why, these are men's works."

Suppose I am riding out in the far west of America, and have left the last log-hut many days' journey behind me. I am where I imagine no foot has been before me. The prairie

dogs chatter at me; but there are few other signs of life. Just then my horse stumbles among the long grass, and getting down, I find some broken wagon wheels, and bones and mouldy clothes. Do I think these came here by accident, or fell from the skies? No; men have been here, brutal, painted, blood-



thirsty Indians, that fell on a family going West to settle, and destroyed them.

Sixty or seventy years ago, a party of men was exploring in

a rocky, lonely district of the East. They found a brook that ran down rapidly between black, steep rocks. As they toiled up this gorge, and got higher and higher, they were astonished to see tombs in the rocks on each side. At last the ruins of a magnificent temple, whose pillars were all curiously and beautifully carved, stood out before them. The mountains fell further back; and spurring on their horses, a still more wonderful scene burst upon them. There in the hollow were houses and streets, and at the foot of the mountains which frowned round, and whose peaks the sun was bathing in beautiful colours, the rocks were worked into chambers and sepulchres. They walked the streets, the silent streets, and the snakes crawled out of their path, and the bats darted out of the tenantless houses. Well, had the rocks started up into the form of that pillared temple? had walls grown straight and roofs flat of themselves? You know they had not. This is an old, ruined city, where men lived and worked, and were buried; and the last man having died centuries ago, this strange place, locked up among the mountains, remained unknown and unseen. However, you knew men had been there, because you saw their works.

Now, can I find anything anywhere more wonderful than the works of our fellow-creatures? Looking round, can I discover something which has in it such marks of superior skill as to lead me to say, "God must have been here?" Yes; one of God's greatest productions is *your own body*. "We are fearfully and wonderfully made." How can I look into your soft, thoughtful eyes, at the dimpled and rosy cheeks of a sweet child, without saying to myself, "Surely this is God's work?"

Some philosophers tell us that light is a substance, and that it travels at the rate of 200,000 miles a second; and yet it strikes your eyes without hurting them. Your very voices are sweeter, and can produce more delightful sounds, than any musical instrument. Every limb you can twist and turn into a thousand movements, and make it serve a thousand uses.

The heart is a pump. The lungs are a furnace. What you eat is the coal that burns. A very wonderful thing about it is that the fire does not wear anything out, as a fire would wear out the plates of a boiler. It helps to strengthen that which it burns against.

All nations have schools at which generations of doctors have been taught to understand and heal this body, and yet the wisest of these men die saying they are only schoolboys, and are disappointed they know so little. No wonder David said, although in his day men were far more ignorant about the body than they are now, "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?"

Let us go out into the world, and see if it does not appear like an exhibition crowded with the productions of God. Pick up a dusty insect and put it under a microscope, and you will be astonished how it glitters in robes of purple and gold. There is this difference between the productions which God makes and those which we make ourselves:—The more we use a magnifying-glass, the less we like our own works, but the more we are delighted with those of God. Thousands of animals, living, moving, and breathing, all of them perfect, tremble in a single spot of water; and as we look at the wonderful sight we say, "This is indeed God's work." I could mention to you the name of a plant which is only the two-hundredth part of an inch in size, and yet it is made up of a thousand divisions. These are little and almost unnoticed works of God; let us take something greater.

Walk out in a bright, starlight night. Astronomers say that some of these stars are so immeasurably far off, that their light took nearly a million of years to reach us. And each of these "little twinkling stars" is a sun itself, to which belong numbers of other stars, which we may never see. Look at yonder bodies which shine with a clearer, larger, steadier light than others. What are they? They are "planets." They make up eight other worlds besides our own, attached to the same sun. Our world is one of the smallest. Yet think of the immense weight of this earth, the weight of its towering rocks and unsounded seas; think what immense force it is which spins this world round the sun at the rate of sixty-eight thousand miles an hour. Recollect, too, that by a beautiful arrangement the world turns over while it flies, like a ball as it rolls along the floor, and this wonderful motion creates day and night. Think how the countless bodies in space, that seem as still as lamps hung down from heaven, travel unceasingly in *their great circuits*. Though their paths cross and recross, yet

no accidents disturb them, and on they move, with the regularity of a machine and the speed of lightning,—

“For ever singing, as they shine,—
‘The Hand that made us is Divine!’”

There are some things happening in the world, that are nothing less than miracles. I will tell you of two. The first is in the air. Among the gases which make up the air, there is one much heavier than the others. And it is very deadly. Let it settle down upon us, and it would seriously injure, if not destroy us. Why does it not fall? It *would* fall, only God prevents it, and mixes it with the other gases, in such a way that air is not poisonous but pleasant.

Another miracle happens in the water. As water becomes colder it increases in weight. This state of things continues until freezing sets in, when a wonderful change takes place. The water then takes the form of ice, and instead of becoming heavier with increasing cold, it actually becomes lighter, and remains at the surface. If the increasing cold made the ice sink, the whole body of water would soon be converted into solid ice. Do you see the reason of all this? In the North Sea, when the ice sets in, the whole sea would become frozen from the surface to the bottom, if it were not for this wonderful arrangement. The fish would all be frozen to death, and the Laplander could never break the ice, and put in his line. In summer, too, the sun might melt a foot or two of ice on the surface, but could never thaw the sea to the bottom. The Laplander would die of hunger, and no ship could ever sail to his shores.

O, but some who pretend to be learned will tell you that these things do not prove there is a God or a Providence! “All this is natural,” they say; “it always has been, and it always will be.” Now, if I could find a watch of such curious and rare workmanship that it could keep time without being wound up for months or years, should I say, “This watch is some natural thing; it must have grown on the rocks or fallen from the heavens?” No, I should say nothing of the kind. I should exclaim, “What a wonderful watchmaker must have made this time-piece; let me find him, that I may give him credit for it.”

I have another objection to answer. A man says to me,

These things you speak of prove nothing about a God. Don't you know they are all the result of laws; laws that are made?" Children, I want you to think a minute, and follow me. What is a law? Is it anything living? No. Is it anything that has a will? No. Can it see, can it feel, can it think? No. A law is of no use *unless there is some power at the back of it.* There are laws in England, but who would be frightened at the law if there were no judges and no policemen to enforce it? And these laws of God. They would do nothing without God there to make the laws act. God gives power to His laws, and without Him the laws would be of no use. Looking at everything we have spoken about, we are obliged to say, "This is the work of none but God. Truly there is a God."



SEEING GOD IN HIS WORKS.

II.



OD'S works not made for show—
Creatures from the deep sea—God
not seen—The wind—The orange
enjoyed—Story of the Arab—Some-
thing like God—The lily—The
ancient harp—The fire that was fed—Night
meetings in London.

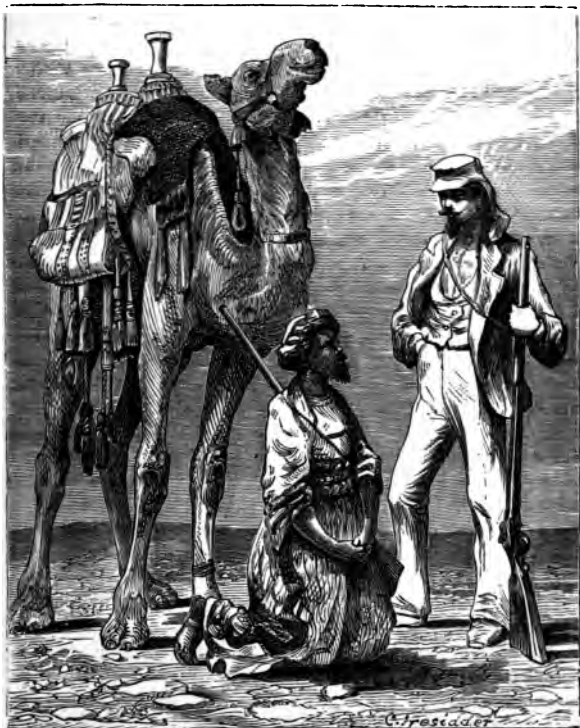
SEEING GOD IN HIS WORKS.

I WANT you to have a little more patience, and to look still more closely into God's wonderful works. When a boy has done a drawing, and you take it into your hands to examine it, he will very likely snatch it from you and hold it away, saying, "There now, it looks better at a distance." Men, when they have finished good pictures, will only have them hung up in certain places where the light falls softly, and they can be seen best.

It is not so with God. Some of His most charming and wonderful things are hidden, and never seen by men who can admire them. Dredge up some of the slime of the deep sea, where no man ever peered: your line brings up little, crawling things, some of the most helpless creatures that move. Yet see! they are provided by God with a whole armoury, with the most perfect little pikes, and swords, and spears, with which they can resist those who attack them. Whether you look beneath you at the *dust*, or above you at the sky, you meet with the same proofs *that there is a God of love and skill*. I could no more doubt

it, than if I tumbled upon a beautifully-framed picture I could doubt there had been an artist and a gilder at work.

You never saw God, it is true; but what does that matter,



The French Infidel and his Arab Guide.

if you see what He does? You never saw the wind, but you knew it was the wind when the old elm-tree shook and let fall a shower of leaves. You never lived in the sunny South, and

sat under your verandah while the servants stirred among the orange-grove, and its sweet scent came up on a gentle wind. You never saw the ship underneath whose decks the crates of oranges were carried to your land. Yet the poor little girl with the fever on her cheek in yonder hospital takes the orange, and thankfully presses out its delightful juice.

A French infidel, a man of some learning, was crossing the desert, in company with an Arab guide. He noticed, with a sneer, that at certain times, the guide, whatever might happen, knelt on the burning sands, and called upon his God. Day after day passed, and still the Arab never failed; till at last, one evening, when he rose from his knees, the philosopher asked him, with a smile of pity and contempt, "How do you know there is a God?" The guide fixed his eye on the scoffer for a moment, in wonder, and then said solemnly, "How do I know that a man, and not a camel, passed my tent last night in the darkness? was it not by the print of his feet in the sand? Even so," and he pointed to the sun, whose last rays were lying across the desert, "that footprint is not of man."

If we cannot see God, we can always see His footprints, always see His works. Though we know not *exactly* when or how this world, with its wonders, was formed, we will look at the care of us which it shows; will take the food we get from its corn-fields, and its cattle; the clothes we can make from its wools; the houses we can put up with its wood and stone; the fruit that reddens on its trees; the music we can hear from its birds, and the health we can draw from its air,—we will take these things, and with our hearts touched we will say, "Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all."

But I wonder if I could find in this world anything which more plainly tells us there is a God than even our bodies, than the insects, or the animals, or the stars. I think so. Can I find anything that in its nature seems to be like God? anything purer, nobler, better than ourselves? Is there anything that will try to persuade me not to do wrong? If that boy's mouth is pursed up, and his brow flushed, and his hand closed *in anger*, is there anything that will whisper to him, "Stay, do not strike?" If that girl has fallen in with some gay, vicious

creatures who are trying to seduce her from her Sunday-school, and will call to take her first into the lanes, and then to the music-hall and ball-room, will not something sweeter try to keep her to her place of worship, to her teacher, to her Bible, and plead with her, "For Christ's sake, do not go?" There is a companion pulling at that youth's arm, leading him off to sin; but there is another little companion, quite as strong, taking hold, not of his arm, but his heart, and beseeching him to keep to his class and his chapel.

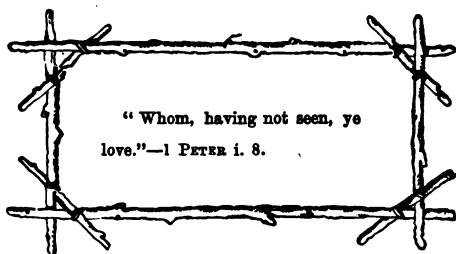
You know what I am talking about. It is *conscience*. You did not give conscience permission to enter your breast, and it would not stay there always if you could help it. How you have, in your self-willed wickedness, tried to tear conscience down, or root it out! You did not like it to forbid you that pleasure, or tell you that the other thing was not right. Yet it lives still. Snatch that delicate lily that rears up its spire of white bells in your garden. Throw it on the footpath, and let men tread upon it. Will it strike down its roots and rear its head again? No; it will lie withering for a few hours, and then perish. You serve your conscience as you would have used that flower. You do what you can to pull it up and fling it out, and you let a great troop of wicked thoughts and deeds trample over it. But it is not dead! Your conscience lives; it stirs under these truths.

The ancients used to make a harp which no fingers, however skilful they were, might play. They would set it in their windows, and the summer airs sweeping over it would call forth soft, low music. Conscience is God's own instrument set in our breasts, and none can touch it but He. You recollect that among all the things which astonished Christian at the Interpreter's house, the fire surprised him most. A man was pouring a stream of water on the flames, and yet they seemed to burn the higher. He was taken round to the other side of the fire, and the wonder was explained. There was Christ always throwing oil upon the flame! So it is with our conscience. We have flooded it with sin, but still its light is burning. It is a God-like thing. It was put within us by God, kept there by Him, and proves to each one of us that there is a God. Whatever place of wickedness you enter, it shall go with you; whatever deed of passion and filth you do, *it shall witness*.

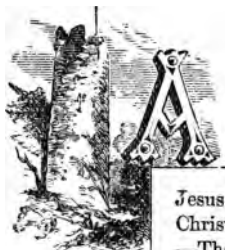
They sometimes hold in London, night meetings for gay and fallen women ; all these girls that are persuaded to come into the room, with paint on their cheeks and trinkets in their ears, are the vilest and worst of the city. They have gone as far from God as they can go. They have learned to laugh at the words "God," "heaven," "church," "chapel." Not to perish themselves only, but to teach others to perish, this has been their business. You say you have no hope of them,—they must have lost all conscience. Wait a little. Coffee is served out, and they have a meal. Then a hymn is started, and the girls join in it ; yes, they do. Some gentleman on the platform begins to speak. He says long-forgotten things about a Saviour's love and mercy ; and he says them so kindly that the girls are hushed into attention. And just then two or three more girls come jostling into the room ; and one of them, with a bloated face and an impudent stare, shouts out some mocking word to the speaker. A titter goes round the room, and you think it is all over with the speeches and the prayers. Nothing can be done with such a shameful congregation, and least of all with that girl who caused the mischief. Is she taken to the door and turned out ? No : she sits down behind the rest ; and while the speaker goes on, one of those serious but affectionate men sits down beside her. He talks to her of One Who will forgive her, as He forgave another fallen sister mentioned in the Gospel. She thinks now—thinks of the time when she trudged the country lane to Sunday-school hand-in-hand with her brother ; thinks of a neat little house far away among the trees and flowers, which she once was glad to call her home ; of her mother knitting in the long evenings, while her father wiped his spectacles, and read the story about the woman who washed the Master's feet with her tears. Ah ! that coarse, wretched creature you had given up, buries her face in her hands, while the tears trickle through her fingers, and she says, "For God's sake, don't talk like that, or I shall run away to my mother again !"

This is no picture of mine ; this happened a short time ago. You have not sinned like her ; you have not filled the street with oaths, nor your life with misery. You have not so much *to repent of yet as she* ; but if your conscience whisper you *are at all wrong*, obey it ; go at once to Christ, and trust Him, *and He will forgive and heal you.*

Children, you have had it proved to you that there is a God by all His works. His world sets Him forth, conscience speaks loudly of Him, and more graciously still, He has published all the story of His compassion and His Son's death for us in the Bible.



PLEADING WITH GOD.



N evening scene.—View from a hill-top.—Cities full of sin.—God threatening.—Abraham pleading.—One soul worth ten thousand.—The cities of the plain burning.—Jesus our “Advocate” and Pleader.—(1.) Christ is worthy to plead—a daughter’s pity—The judge and the soldier.—(2.) Christ pleads at the right moment—In court—When we want Christ—How a girl saved her brother.—(3.) Christ pleads with success.

PLEADING WITH GOD.

GENESIS xviii. 23—33; 1 JOHN ii. 1.

WE can fancy it was a glorious summer evening when Abraham went out from his tent to walk a little way towards Sodom with three strange visitors. This was the high pasture-land to the west, on which Abraham’s flocks were feeding, and his tents were pitched. Down below them lay the beautiful plain which Lot had selfishly taken when Abraham gave him his choice of country. The sun, as it sinks among the hills behind Abraham’s tents, seems to linger among the purple mountains, as if it could not depart. Deep down in the valley, the Jordan was winding like a thread of gold, till it lost itself in a great lake. There, among the windings of the river, and about the shores of the lake, were the gray buildings of Sodom and Gomorrah. To Abraham, everything looked sweet and pleasant.

No doubt some of you have been on a hill-top, and you have thought how fair and bright everything was. The white cottages shone under the elm-trees, and the red farm-houses

stood out in the green orchards, and the spires of the village churches rose above the trees. You did not know that there were foul pools and dirty ditches that were spreading fever in those places. But there were. You did not know that men



Abraham and the Angels overlooking Sodom.

were quarrelling in the beer-houses, and that fathers were cursing their children. Yet it was so.

These cities were full of wickedness. There was not a child

in all those houses kneeling down to say his evening prayer. O! the cities were full of fever—the fever of sin, that burns and spreads more than any other fever does. God was intending on the morrow to sweep off such abodes of wickedness from the face of His earth.

When the visitors were gone, (angels they were,) God tells Abraham what He is about to do. “Will not God spare them? not for the sake of the righteous people there? I have a nephew there, Lot; he has not forgotten God, surely! I will go and plead for him and for them.” So Abraham purposes, and going under the shade of those olives in the twilight, he prays.

He intercedes, he speaks to God for the people, he throws himself between God and the sinners. Does God hear? Yes. He obtains a promise from God that if there are fifty good souls in the cities, He will not destroy them. Feeling more and more pity, he pleads on until God declares He will not overthrow the cities if only ten righteous men are to be found among all the people. If there were one hundred thousand inhabitants in those cities, and ten persons would have saved them, you can see in a moment that God would have accepted one good man for ten thousand of the wicked. How precious in the world is one good soul, that ten thousand should be spared for his sake! If only to spare the wicked, let me be good, let me keep good. Were there ten persons, either men, women, or children, who loved God in those cities? No, there were not! Lot was dragged out, with his wife and his two daughters, when the sun rose the next morning, and directly afterwards the cities were burnt up.

It was no evil-designed man that set a match to different houses, and the wind spread the fire. It was no army that camped about them with banners, and poured down red-hot shot. God was their enemy, and He rained upon them a horrible rain of fire, out of which none of them came. They tell us what a dreadful sight was the bombardment of Strasbourg by the Germans in 1870. Day and night the flames shot up like great tongues from the city. Far down the valley of the Rhine women came out of their cottages, and shaded their eyes while they looked upon the dense smoke and the leaping fire. So Abraham looked from his pastures, and “Lo, the smoke of

the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." To this very hour the Dead Sea, as it lies deep down among the burnt and blackened mountains, seems to have the dreadful secret of the destruction of these cities about it.

What I want to speak more particularly to you about is this pleading with God. There is another and harder word for pleader—advocate. They call a man who pleads in a court of law an "advocate." St. John calls Jesus our Advocate: "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John ii. 1.) Yes, Jesus is our Pleader. Every day in heaven our names are brought up: your name, my boy; yours, my girl. Every day, maybe, we sin, we do wrong, we vex and grieve God. God tells His Son, as He told Abraham, that He cannot bear our sin, and that He must punish. Jesus, thanks be to Him, undertakes our cause, speaks to God for us, turns away God's anger, spares and saves us. There are three things about Jesus Christ's pleading for us which I want you to recollect.

1. *Christ is worthy to plead.*—Jesus is God's Son, His dear, His much "beloved Son,"—the Son who is never denied, and never turned away. "Father, . . . Thou hearest Me always." That was what Jesus Himself said when He was on earth.

Suppose I am rich and kind, and have one little daughter—only one child—of whom I am very, very fond. My little girl is out one day in the streets of the city, and hears a childish, pitiful voice cry, "Water-cress! water-cress!" She sees the child's bare feet pattering on the pavement, and her thin clothes blown about by the wind. My daughter stops the carriage, and will have this child, motherless and starved, taken up, and driven to my house. She brings her into the hall, and running to me says, "Pa, come and look at this poor little thing, without any mother, without any shoes, and without anything to eat; won't you do something for her?" Will I go and say I will not have such a dirty, ragged child in my house, and tell the servant to put her out at once? No, I will not. It would break my little girl's heart if I did. For my child's sake, because the tears are in her eyes, because that voice I love so well pleads for her, I will do something for that child. It is so with God. Because Christ is so noble and worthy, and because He has taken pity upon us poor deserted children,

and spoken words of love to us, God Himself feels for us.

One day a soldier came into a judge's office, poorly dressed, and his face showing deep suffering. The judge, who was very busy, pretending not to notice him, continued his work. The soldier fumbled in his pockets for a long time, and then said in a disappointed voice, as though he saw that he was not welcome, "I *did* have a letter for you." The judge made no reply. Presently the man's thin, trembling hand pushed a note along the desk. The judge was about to say, "I have no time for such matters as these," when he found the writing was that of his own son, a soldier in the army. He took up the note. It read something like this: "Dear father, the bearer is a soldier, discharged from the hospital. He is going home to die. Assist him in any way you can *for Charlie's sake*." The judge said to a friend afterward: "I took the soldier to my heart for Charlie's sake; I let him sleep in Charlie's bed. I clothed him, and supplied him with every comfort for the sake of my own dear boy."

Children, God will never turn you away without answering your prayers, for His dear Son's sake. God will forgive our sin and meanness if Jesus takes hold of us by the hand. Jesus suffered for us. Before that Hand led us up to God, it was torn by the nails; before that Face could smile upon us, the colour went from it. He fainted and died!

"'Worthy the Lamb that died,' they cried,
 'To be exalted thus!'
 'Worthy the Lamb!' our hearts reply;
 'For He was slain for us.'"

2. *Christ pleads at the right moment.*—I have often been in a court and heard a Magistrate say to a prisoner who was hanging down his head, "Have you any friends who can say anything for you?" The miserable man, looking round, has answered, "No, my friends are all at a distance; there is no one here I know." Jesus is always there *when we want Him*. He will not be with us if we do not care for Him; if we do not beg of Him. When is the *right moment* at which we want *Jesus*? It is when God charges us with our sins against Him; it is when God whispers to us we have been enemies to Him, and we deserve to perish. It may be now, this minute, that

God is telling us that, and making us feel how wicked and miserable we are. Then it is *now* we want a pleader, it is now we want Jesus to step between us and God, and obtain for us God's pardon. Do not fear; Jesus will always come to your rescue just when you need Him. Let me tell you how a girl once hastened and saved her brother.

During the civil war in America, a fine youth of eighteen, named Benjamin Owen, the son of a farmer of Vermont, was fighting with the Northern army, when the news reached home that he was about to be shot for having been asleep at his post! The news stunned the mother; it made his sister, Blossom, walk about the house as if in a dream; and as for his father, he was quite heartbroken. Mr. Owen kept moving about the room with his face in his hands, saying, "My dear boy! he couldn't have slept above a minute, I know; Bennie never dozed over his duty; how quick he used to be!" At this time there was a tap at the door, and Blossom opening it found a neighbour had brought a letter from Bennie. The letter told them all about it; how Bennie was on the march, and had carried the baggage of a companion named Jemmy Carr, because Jemmy was sick; how it was Jemmy's turn to keep watch when they halted for the night, and Bennie, tired down as he was, would take his place. The letter went on, "But I was too tired, father. I could not have kept awake if I had had a gun at my head. . . . Don't lay my death against Jemmy. The poor boy is broken-hearted, and does nothing but beg of them to let him die in my stead. I can't bear to think of mother and Blossom. Comfort them! . . . Good-bye, father! God seems near and dear to me; not at all as if He wished me to perish for ever, but as if He felt sorry for His poor, sinful child, and would take me to be with Him and my Saviour in a better, better life."

That night, Blossom stole out from home, leaving a note behind to say where she had gone, and hurried away, pale but brave, to the nearest railway-station. She was caught up by the mail train, and travelled all that night from station to station, past New York, right on to Washington. She told the railway conductors that she was going to ask President Lincoln to spare her brother, and they treated her gently and sent her on quickly. The President had just sat down the next morning

among his papers, when the door was pushed open timidly, and Blossom entered.

"Well, my child, what do you want so early this morning?" asked Mr. Lincoln, kindly.

"Bennie's life, please Sir," said Blossom, trembling.

"Who is Bennie, pray?"

"Bennie! he's my brother. O Sir! they're going to shoot him for being asleep at his post."

"Yes, I recollect. But it was a time of great danger, my child. Your brother's sleep might have been very serious for us."

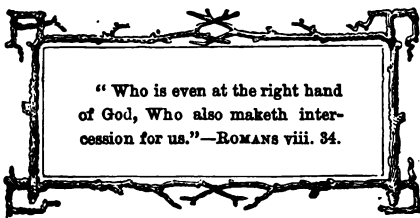
"So my father said," Blossom replied, almost choking. "But poor Bennie was so tired, Sir, and Jemmy so weak."

"What's that, child? come and tell me," and the great President drew Blossom to him, and got out all her story, and read Bennie's letter. He was not long in writing an order, and when Blossom heard him call a messenger, and say to him, "Send this dispatch at once," she felt her brother was saved.

"Wait till to-morrow, my child, and Bennie shall go home with you," said Mr. Lincoln. You may guess what a glorious journey home they had—Bennie and Blossom; and how all the village came out to meet them. Blossom pleaded, you see, at the right moment.

3. *Christ pleads with success.*—Abraham did all he could for the wicked in Sodom and Gomorrah, but he could not save them. A pious father and mother, though they put your hands together, and taught you to pray as soon as you could speak, may not, after all, get God's mercy for you. I know a boy who is always praying for his father, and begging him to go to chapel, and that father's life has been spared in many accidents, perhaps for the sake of his boy. Yet still he is not a good man. "Father, come to service to-night, won't you?" says the boy, so imploringly to him, sometimes. "Not to-night, my lad; go on praying for me." This is the father's usual answer. That boy may pray on, but if the father does not himself beg Jesus to say a word for him, he will never be saved. Jesus never lost a case that He undertook. When you can get Christ to speak a word for you, you may be sure that *He will shortly turn to you a smiling face, and say, "you are saved."* God, coming down to punish us, to cut us off, will

pass by a teacher who is kneeling down and praying in our behalf ; He will pass by a mother, a father, or a sister ; but He will never pass by Jesus Christ, His Son. Only call upon Jesus to plead for you, only trust Him, and you are safe. Is there no one calling for His help now ? Amen.



ABRAHAM'S TRIAL, AND HOW HE BORE IT.

GENESIS xxii. 1-14.



OD speaking to friends.—God “trying” Abraham.—Isaac mentioned.—The command.—Starting early.—Three days to think about it.—Abraham sad.—Thoughts on going up the hill.—All is ready.—Isaac prepared to die.—Sooner die than disobey God.—Drowned by a gang of lads.—How Abraham could kill his son.—Trust in God.—A mother who lost her child.—A ram provided.—Lessons from the story.

ABRAHAM'S TRIAL.

You must have heard how, one night, when the lamp in the holy temple at Shiloh was burning low, and a boy lay in one of the rooms, half slumbering, thinking it was nearly time to get up and open the doors, a strange, solemn voice called “Samuel.” It was God Who was speaking, and He was going to make this little boy His friend, and tell him what He would not trust to any one else. Long ago, before there was any Bible, God came to men in quiet places, and at still hours, and gave His directions to those He loved and trusted.

So it was that night when Abraham had gone into his tent, and heard God calling his name. It was a sad visit that was that. God came, and “tempted Abraham.” For the word “tempted,” put the word “tried,” and you will better understand what was meant. Before you take a thing for your own, you try it, don't you? You see whether your book is soiled, you see whether your ball is sound, don't you, before you take it home? God,

before He took Abraham close to His heart, wanted to know and to feel how much he loved and obeyed Him.

Listen to God's command :—"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac." At these words, how Abraham would shake off all the sleepiness from his eyes. Isaac was his only boy, since Ishmael had been sent off with a piece of bread and a bottle of water. Isaac was the boy about whom God had spoken great and wonderful things when he should become a man. Isaac was the kind and obedient lad, the favourite with the herdsmen, the very favourite of the flock, his mother's and his father's pride. O! what kind word was God going to speak about the boy?

Take "thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah," and—what? How Abraham's heart beat for the words which should follow. "And offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." What a shock to that affectionate father! Kill the boy, slay him, burn up his body with fire, take him away from home, never to be seen again! Impossible! Abraham would think he must be mistaken. O! you may depend upon it Abraham knew that voice too well to be deceived; he had often heard its comfortable words. But is he not ready to say, "Lord, Thou hast taught me Thou art loving, and would'st spare all men. I would do everything else, but kill my own son I cannot!" If he had spoken to God like this, and excused himself, perhaps God would have forgiven him. But he does not say anything of the kind; he never thinks of disobeying God.

Before the sun was up, Abraham was stirring, and woke up his boy. How could he wait till all was light, when Sarah, his wife, would want to know where they were going? He called Isaac and two of his servants, saddled the ass while they were getting ready, and cut up the wood for the sacrifice. Now they are off; in the gray cold morning. They pass through the bleating flocks, and through the cattle, and Abraham has not the heart to look back to the tent where his wife still sleeps.

They are some distance from home, and the sun is bright, and the air is clear. The hill where the solemn and dreadful deed is to be done, is yet three days' journey. How much more sad that makes it to Abraham. Perhaps he could have done *this thing better* if he had done it at once. He fancies if God

had told him to go to that little valley not far from his tents, where the brook is almost hidden by the olives,—so far that his boy's groans could not be heard at home,—if he had been told



Abraham and Isaac ascending the Mount.

to go there this morning when it was scarcely light, and offer *the sacrifice*, he could have done it. But, no! he must think *about it*, and have it before him for three long days. If your *little sister* is very ill, and the doctor comes every day, and

they tell you you must speak quietly and must not play, they do not tell you she is going to die, till her breath is growing hard, and she is just passing away. Abraham, poor man, had to think of his boy dying for three full days. What was much more dreadful, he had to think he had to slay him!

Isaac saw his father was sad and quiet, and he talked on to the two young men that were with him. The birds must have chattered and sung in the bushes, but Abraham never heard them. The brooks bubbled in sweet leafy places, but Abraham did not think they sounded soft and pleasant. During the third day's journey, Abraham had before him the hill which he was to climb with Isaac—they two together—for no one else should see what was to be done. At the foot of the hill, Abraham gave Isaac the wood to carry, and himself picked up the knife and the tinder. The young men were told to stay there while their master and his son went up to worship. Much those young men wondered that they should have come so far just to offer a sacrifice, and that they did not see it themselves as they did at home.

Abraham is an old man, who has lived more than a hundred years. He thinks of Sarah, his wife. He knows how she doats on the boy; how she used to brighten up when Isaac came in tired from shooting or following the sheep; how lonely she feels now because they are so long away. Abraham now and then, when Isaac is looking off, turns such loving, tearful eyes upon him—on his fine form, on his soft, rich curls. They are toiling up, Abraham with slow steps, and Isaac loaded with the wood. "Father," said the boy, "here is the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" How touching! That must have cut his father's heart more deeply than a knife could have done. Could his father say to him, "You are to be the lamb; you are to be slain, and to be burnt, my boy?" No, he had



not the heart to do it then. With his head turned away from

those innocent eyes, the father answers beautifully: "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb." Now they reach the place of sacrifice.

Everything should be done carefully, as for God, and in God's sight. And now all is ready. It is time Isaac should be told he is to die. We can fancy Abraham drawing his boy aside. There on the soft turf they sit, the father's arm thrown over the son's neck, while with trembling words he tells him all. When Isaac hears that in a few minutes he must lie bleeding and dying on the altar, what does he do? Does he murmur, does he tell his father he must not obey God? He is young and quick, and even now he could fling himself out of his father's arms and bound down the hill. No, he does not try to get away. He has been taught that God has been kind to his father and mother, and he has said to himself that he would serve Him as they have done. Is he the only boy who has shown he would sooner die than disobey or grieve God? Let me tell you of one.

A pious family from Europe, who had settled in one of the cities of America, had for their eldest boy a pleasant and gentle, yet a brave lad. One day he was out, and a gang of rough, cruel boys, that hated him, met him, and said, "We've found out where there is a splendid orchard with lots of fruit, and we're going to get some; come along, we mean you to go."

"What, steal! I couldn't do it for anything," said the boy, throwing back his honest head.

"I say you shall," said one hulking fellow, in a rage, "or else we will put you in the river and drown you, we will."

The little hero saw they would do it, but he did not scream; he didn't try to get out of their road. He stood up and told them, "I can't steal—you can kill me first."

And these lads laid hold of him who would rather perish than offend God, or be a thief, and carried him to the river and threw him in, and the water shut out for ever the sight of his smiling face.

Isaac allows his father to tie him down to the altar. It is time to ask how Abraham could bring himself to shed that boy's blood. Don't you recollect he said to the young men he left at the bottom of the hill, "We will come again to you?" Turn to Hebrews xi. 19, and you will find that Paul says

Abraham could offer up his son because he believed "God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." Here is the secret: Abraham really believed that though the boy's blood should flow down the altar, and he should die, and his body be burnt up, yet God would raise him up, and they two should walk back together. He trusted God entirely. God gave Isaac to him in a wonderful way, and He had the right to take the boy again. If God had told him to kill himself, Abraham would have done it, rather than he would have killed his son. Many fathers and mothers have to give up their children. They are obliged to see them die, to see God take them. Yet they still trust Him and love Him.

A dear little fellow, nine years old, was run over by a train near New York. A policeman picked him up, and on the way to the hospital he said, "Tell mother I'm going straight to my Saviour." His mother soon came to his bedside at the hospital, and he said to her, "Mother, I'm going to Jesus. O! I love Him so much. Don't let them cut off my leg. But if they do, never mind, it won't hurt me as much as they hurt Jesus." When his father arrived, he gave him this message,—"Tell brother Eddy, if he feels lonely now, because he has no brother, to learn to love Jesus, and He will be his Brother." These were his last words. Two hours after that he died. And his mother! did she complain of God? No. When she got home, this is what she said,—"The Lord has taken my Charlie: 'though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.'"

It was this great trust in God—that God *must* mean well—which Abraham had. It was this that made his fingers able to hold a knife. In another instant his son's blood would have been flowing; but God, Who did not want that life, Who only wanted obedience, now stepped in. A voice is heard from above, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad....for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me."

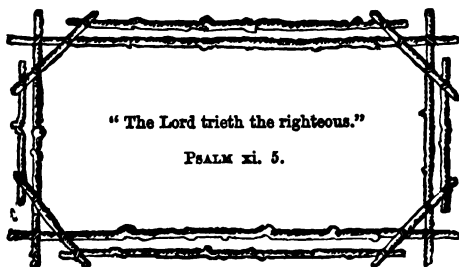
A ram they never saw before is now noticed among the bushes, and is laid struggling on the altar in the place of the quiet Isaac, and God's great and sweet promises are heard again.

There are many lessons in this beautiful story, and I want you to learn two.

1. *God will always give us power to obey Him.*—We can never

have anything so hard to do as Abraham. God never told any one to climb to heaven without putting a safe ladder down for him. God tells us to be sorry for our sins, and to leave them. At the same time that he tells us to be sorry for sin, He gives us tenderness of heart so that we may feel as we ought, and it is His strong hand which puts away our wickedness from us.

2. *The story wonderfully foreshows Christ's sacrifice.*—Three days Abraham had that dreadful hill-top before him. For three years after He was baptized, wherever He went, Jesus could see straight in His way the garden where He should groan, and the hill where He must be nailed up, and mocked, and stabbed for us. God spared Abraham the pain of killing his boy, and spared the boy the fainting of death, yet He "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." Can we keep our hearts from such a love? We are praying Him to take them, are we not? Amen.



GOOD OUT OF EVIL.



JOSEPH'S brothers.—Story of their sin—their fears.—Visit to Joseph.—Joseph comforts them.—What is seen at a pottery.—Children made to suffer.—The happy blind boy.—Daniel among the lions.—A bar of iron beaten out.—Trees cut.—A scene at a cotton mill.—How pearls grow.—The deaf and dumb girls at Troyes.—Joseph and Jesus alike—(1.) Hated by his brethren.—(2.) Sold by his brethren.—(3.) Not known by his brethren.—(4.) Forgiving his brethren.—Conclusion.

GOOD OUT OF EVIL.

A LESSON FROM THE LIFE OF JOSEPH.

"As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."—GENESIS I. 20.

I SHOULD have been sorry to have been as guilty as Joseph's brothers. It was forty years since that day when they let the fair-faced boy down into the old well, and left him to perish, like the beasts that had come there dying for water and found none, and whose bones Joseph stood upon! forty years since they saw the Ishmaelites, with their camels, tent-poles, and spears, threading their way along the hills, and stopped them, and sold Joseph for a sum which would not have been five shillings apiece! It was a long time ago, but it only seemed yesterday. They remembered how they never told the merchants to be kind to him, never asked them to be careful to

whom they sold him, never wished him "good-bye," though he looked back towards them for miles. Their father Jacob was dead now. The funeral was over; the mourners had all gone back to their homes, and Joseph to his palace.

"Joseph was fond of his father, and we were safe when his father was alive, but he will forget us now. He will only remember how cruel we were to him; he may throw us into prison for it, or drive us out of the country."

So the brothers thought, and they went to the palace, and fell down before Joseph, the governor, crying, "'Behold we are thy servants;' forgive our old ill-treatment of thee." Joseph wept. He had not forgotten anything, but he had forgiven all. He thought of it all, and what it had done for him. He saw that



if his brothers had not sold him he might never have seen Egypt. If he had not passed those weary months in prison, he would not have met with Pharaoh's butler, who brought him to the king. He did not think at the time that through the gaol was the right way to the king's house,

but so it was. Joseph was once proud about a coat; he was not proud now of a palace and a chariot. Joseph was once simple—so child-like that he told his brothers his dream about their obeying him; but he was not simple now. He was the "prime minister" of the first nation in the world. He had been made humble and kind by his own sufferings. When his brothers pleaded for themselves, his eyes filled up with tears, and he said, "As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good....Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones."

This, then, is our text: how God brings good out of what we think is evil.

Come with me to a pottery. Do you see this gray clay? Put your fingers into it, and it will soil them. Touch it, and it will take every finger-mark. Come again within a day or two. They are opening the furnace, and carrying out things

beautifully white and pure. These things are made of the clay which dirtied your fingers. See what the fire has done! Many youths, many men, are like that clay. Every bad companion can leave his finger-mark on them, and can injure them. Then God comes and puts them into the fire. I mean He makes them suffer. He puts one into a hospital, and another lies ill of fever, and there they learn to be patient, like Christ. When the pain has gone, how much more loving they are than they used to be, how much purer. Bad companions leave them because they cannot do as they like with them!

Here is a little boy. The scarlet fever came upon him some years ago. It settled in his eyes, and left him quite blind. He has brothers and sisters who used to quarrel and complain, and make home unhappy. It is not so now. They have learned to be contented and gentle. Who was it taught them? It was Arthur. Not Arthur when he could see, and run, and play, but since his eyes have been closed, and they have had to lead him about.

"I cannot help wishing he could see," said Lizzie, to a friend who called one day.

"I dare say," said the visitor; "but I hope you do not try to make Arthur discontented?"

"Arthur isn't discontented," said Lizzie, earnestly. "He loves God, and loves sets everything right; doesn't it, Arthur?"

"I don't feel cross now," said the little blind boy, quietly; "when I am alone, I pray, and sing my Sabbath-school hymns, and sing and sing, and God's in the room, and it feels light—and—I forget I'm blind at all."

God had turned the little fellow's darkness into light; He had been and comforted him before any one else. Out of evil came good.

Daniel! why did you keep praying before your open window? You knew your enemies were whispering outside, and intended to seize you for it? Why not go into some "inner chamber and shut the door?" It is too late now; it is all over with you; the lions' appetites are sharp. O, it was an evil and bitter hour when they opened the den of the roaring brutes and let you in! So we might have thought. But God took care of him. The lions fawned upon him like lap-dogs, and he could weave the hair of their manes in his fingers. In the morning, when

the king brought him out, and declared that Daniel's God should be his God, then how the good shone in the midst of the evil.



“A bar of iron worth £1, worked into horse-shoes, is said to be worth £2; made into needles, it is worth £70; made into pen-knife blades, it is worth £650; made into balance-springs of watches, it is worth £50,000. What a drilling the poor bar must undergo to reach all that; but hammered, and beaten, and pounded, and polished, how was its value increased! It might well have quivered and complained under the hard knocks it got; but were they not all necessary to draw out its fine qualities?” There are some trees which seem to be of little use. They have no blossoms worth notice, or any fruit fit to eat. But get a knife to them. Cut into their bark, and then what precious, healing balm flows out!

A few years ago, a strange thing happened at a factory yard in Lancashire. The foremen and lads, the women and girls,—all the hands on the place,—were gathered round *the entrance-gates* of the mill. The women look pale, and *the lads thin and weak*. A railway-wagon comes rolling into

the yard, heavily laden with cotton. The lads begin to shout. The men get round the wagon, and slap the bags like old friends, saying, "Hey, owd chaps, but I'm fain (glad) to see yow agen." Suddenly a foreman hushes them, and they begin to sing.

"Praise God from Whom all blessings flow"—

that is what they sing, and the song goes on till the voices are almost choked. What is it all about? The wagons had brought in hundreds of bales of cotton before, and they had never looked out of the mill-windows to notice them. There had been war in America, and the plantations had been laid waste, and for two or three years no ship had sailed to England with cotton. Half-a-million of people in Lancashire had had no work; all the mills had been idle, the cupboards empty. O! those were hard, dark days; but did no good come from them? They taught Englishmen everywhere to be kind and feeling. How people were touched when they were told that little Lancashire children were lying dead in their homes of hunger and cold, like flies killed off by the frost. How the money poured in! Every post brought it. Every train was loaded with clothing for them. Every ship coming to our shores was like a white-winged dove that God had sent with food, for the ships brought gifts. It taught the world to love the suffering. It taught the weavers, now that the first load of cotton had come, to sing and give thanks to God in a mill-yard because they could begin to work and earn their bread.

Perhaps you don't know how pearls grow. They are taken from the shells of fish, like oysters and mussels. Near Llandudno, in Wales, which some of you may have visited in the summer, there is a river called the Conway. I have seen men on the river in boats, dragging from the bottom with long rakes great numbers of mussels. They open the black shells of these mussels, and sometimes find pearls inside. What is the history of these pearls? They were at first only grains of sand and grit which the mussel took in by accident along with the water. But this grit got between his soft body and his shell. It gave him great pain. It troubled him so much that he was obliged to see if he could not smoothe it and soften it. So he began to cover it with a sort of slime, which by and by became hard and bright, until it was a pearl!

The oysters, which contain the best pearls, do the same. You see, then, that the pearl grows out of pain and suffering.

In the old city of Troyes, in France, more than a hundred years ago, there was an interesting little scene which very few saw. A pious young minister from the cathedral was walking in one of the narrow streets, visiting the poorer people, when he turned into a cottage. He came upon two girls sitting on a bench sewing. He spoke to them, but they only turned their large, wondering eyes on him and his skull-cap and long, loose coat. He spoke again, but they only seemed uneasy, and motioned to each other. Just then the mother came in, and putting her hand on the brushed-up hair of one of the girls, she burst into tears, and said, "Alas, Sir, my daughters are deaf and dumb!" The visitor felt himself pitying them, and wondered how he could teach them of their Saviour. He went backwards and forwards to the cottage till he found out a way of making himself understood, till he invented the first alphabet for the deaf and dumb. He lived to be more than seventy years old, and made the first home in the world for deaf and dumb children. See how good came out of evil! See how those two poor girls were the means of bringing about all the homes for the deaf and dumb that have existed, and all the ways by which we can speak to them of God and heaven. The old man's grave is in the cemetery of Père la Chaise, at Paris, where the Prussians and the French fought so desperately.

Joseph and Jesus were in many things alike. They were both "made perfect through sufferings." Did you ever notice how similar things happened to both?

Joseph was *hated by his brethren*. Jesus had brothers,—the carpenter's sons,—and they wanted to force Him down to the feast at Jerusalem, where He was likely to be seized and put in prison. St. John never wrote anything more sad than when he said of Jesus, "Neither did His brethren believe in Him."

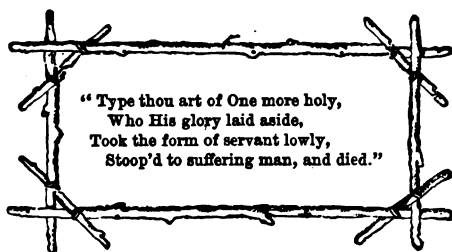
Joseph was *sold* for twenty pieces of silver. Jesus was *sold* for thirty pieces, and it was by Judas, who liked to be looked upon as His brother.

Joseph was *not known by his brethren*, though he was giving them bread. Jesus, who calls all men His brothers, is *not known by them* since He has gone into heaven. Jesus speaks *to them*, and they do not listen. He feeds them, and they do

not notice it. He says, "I am the Bread of Life; He that cometh to Me shall never hunger;" and they do not believe it.

Joseph forgave his brethren. Jesus forgives; but we think He does not, and many a time we look up to Him and say, "*Canst Thou pardon?*" Let us think of Him standing among us like Joseph, and asking, "Why doubt me?" and "speaking peaceably" to us.

You followed Joseph through all his life, and your hearts went with him. When they corded him and let him into the well, how you pitied him! When you saw him sold, and look back to his brothers across the hills, how sorry you felt! When they shut him up in prison, though nobody had seen a cloud of anger on his brow, or a stain on his character, how your love went out to him! how you felt you could embrace him! Have you no love, no tears for Jesus? He was nobler and purer than Joseph. No love, when Judas brought the soldiers for Him? No love, when He looked back sorrowfully after His friends? No love, when they pushed down the thorns into His head? No love, when they hammered the nails into His feet and hands?



IMPORTANT LITTLE THINGS.



WHAT great rivers carry.—The little basket at the river-side.—The Princess takes the child.—It is a little matter.—Little things important (1.) because they are not noticed—Building up a character—Strawson the brook—The boy and the Testament—The girls at the fountain—No “little sins.”—(2.) Because they are repeated—Drops of rain—Coral insects—Spider and snake—Chalk rocks.—(3.) Because they draw great things after them—A tree in India—How chimneys are climbed—Sinful thoughts—A child snatched from a fire.

IMPORTANT LITTLE THINGS.

“She laid it in the flags by the river’s brink.”—Exodus ii. 3.

GREAT rivers carry much with them to the sea. They bring down mud and sand, which, lying at their mouths, form large islands. They bring down the bodies of sheep and cattle which the floods have carried off in the mountains, and the summer waves will by and by play with their bones on the sea-shore. But no river brought down that which Pharaoh’s daughter found near the long papyrus reeds when she came to bathe. There it was, a little basket daubed all over with slime, which looked gray and hard as the sun shone upon it. No crocodile had overturned it. No ibis had pecked at it with its long beak. The child inside is fair and well fed, and it opens its little dark eyes wonderingly, and gives a restless cry which goes straight to the heart of that young lady. There is a girl hurrying past the rushes, coming to see what is the matter. She says, “*Shall I call a woman to nurse the child for you?*” The girl



The finding of Moses by Pharaoh's Daughter.

is the baby's sister ; the nurse who is called is the mother,—you know the plot they laid. It was no uncommon thing to find a Hebrew child in the Nile in those days, with its eyes closed, its tiny hands clenched, and death on its face. Why should Pharaoh's daughter take up one of these children, when her father had ordered them to be thrown into the river? Will not she soon be tired of it? No. The baby will grow up to the boy, and then she will take him from his mother's hut to the palace. Teachers will be found for him, and he will learn all about the language, and laws, and army of Egypt. He is to become a great man, who will himself make laws for the Hebrews, and lead them on to battle. We shall hear of him again as Moses, the friend of God, the writer of part of the Bible. It was a little thing for Pharaoh's daughter to come upon a child there on the river bank, but see what the result was!

What I would first say is, that,—

1. LITTLE THINGS ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY ARE
NOT NOTICED.

Many men and children go staring through the world, looking at nothing in particular. They like great shows, great things, great men. They never look carefully at little things. They pass through a wood, and say, "How dark and dull it is." Another keeps his eyes open, and he says, "How I've enjoyed the walk! Did you notice how old those yew-trees were? Here's a fine pimrose I picked up! What a pretty fern!"

Little things are not noticed, but there we make a great mistake. What would you think of the man who expected his house to be built, and yet told the bricklayers they must not go to the trouble of laying every little brick? I wonder how our watches would keep time if the watchmaker had told his men that it did not matter about putting in some of the little parts. You want to build up a good character of your own, you want to be honest men and good women, yet you think you can do it without putting in good tempers and sincere prayers,—you may leave those out. I tell you it will not do.

There was a merchant in San Francisco who did not think it worth while to look at the wooden piles on which his warehouse was built over the river. One day the whole warehouse fell. A small water-worm had eaten away the wood until it had become quite rotten.

I was walking along a brook-side the other day, and the water seemed to follow me. There it was stirring the grasses, and I should have said the brook was flowing that way. But looking at it more closely, I found some straws and sticks which, though the wind was against them, were moving steadily past me in the other direction, and of course I saw that that was the course of the brook. Which is the best way to find out the character of people? Why, to look at the little things about them.

A boy once went to a merchant for a situation. It was the first time he had tried to do anything for a living.

"Have you got a character?" asked the merchant.

"No, Sir."

"What's that shining in your jacket pocket?"

The boy went rather red, and pulled out a New Testament, with gilt edges. Inside was written, "Presented to — for good behaviour and attendance, by his affectionate teacher."

"That's character enough for me, my boy," said the merchant.

"You may come in the morning."

It was a little thing to carry a Testament, but it showed the merchant what sort of a boy was before him.

Suppose it is a hot July day, and some of you girls are coming home from school. There is a fountain on the way, and you get round it. An old apple-woman comes up; one of you make way for her, and because it is awkward for her, you say, "Let me help you," and hand her the brimming cup. Then, without waiting to be thanked, the girl that did it might run off with a shake of her curls and a hymn on her lips. That would be a trifling thing, but it would show a kind heart. This is the way in which good, kind natures are formed. If you neglect to do little kind things, you will wake up some day and find a cold, hard heart within you that will not feel.

You never hear God speak about "little sins." It is as wrong to steal a lead pencil as it is to steal a pound, because God says, "Thou shalt not steal." It would hurt you to take a penny, as much as if you stole a bank-note. I beg of you, do not go wrong in little matters because people may not notice it. Again,—

II. LITTLE THINGS ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY ARE REPEATED.

When God wants the fields which have been sown to be watered, He does not call for the rivers and the pools to over-

flow them. No! He calls for drops of rain. They fall quickly, patter, patter on the ground. One drop would not answer, but repeated drops do. They steal down through the soil till they come to the little grain of corn, and say, "Here we are: God sent us to moisten you." The grain drinks in the water, feels life, and shoots up a green blade.

Sometimes, in the South-Seas, the islands are shaken by volcanoes from below, and the solid ground stirs and sinks some feet beneath the sea. What is done then? God calls in the little coral insects, which swarm on the land that is sunken. Working away night and day like little stonemasons, and laying down their shells when they are dead, after long, long years they raise the ground once more above the sea. Round most of the islands there, the coral insect has made belts of ground which break the force of the sea, and make it a safe and pleasant place inside for ships to anchor. Look what the little coral insect is able to do by repetition!

I read lately that a man had come upon a remarkable sight. He found a snake, above a foot long, fastened up in a spider's web, so that he could not wriggle out. The snake had been asleep or lazy, and the little spider had all the time been winding his web round him, one thread after another, until it had been too strong for the reptile. See! one thread from the web would have been of no use, but many little threads held the snake fast.

The chalk cliffs in the South of England are hundreds of feet high in some places; so high that if men should fall from them they would be dashed to pieces. What do you think they are made of? They are said to be made of the shells of millions of creatures. One of those shells would never have been seen, but millions of them are enough to make high rocks.

Like the thin thread of a spider, like the small shells in the chalk, are many of the little things that you do. A spider's thread was a little thing, but the snake allowed one too many threads to be tied round him. You may think it a little thing to turn Jesus away, but O! you may do it once too often, so that He may leave you. Again,—

III. LITTLE THINGS ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY DRAW GREAT THINGS AFTER THEM.

Children, have your eyes on little things, you do not know what will follow them. In India there is a tree,—the sacred

fig-tree,—and no man who would take care of his house allows that tree to grow near a chink in the wall. Let there be ever so small a crack in the wall, and the tree will put in one of its branches, and widen the hole until it breaks up the brickwork. I am afraid there are not many of you who have not some little chinks and holes about you. Look at your hearts now. Is there nothing dangerous creeping in? You opened a little hole when you let an ill-temper in, or when you thought a hard thing about God, or when you listened to something wicked. Let these things grow, and they will ruin you.

Do you know how men climb tall chimneys? They first fly a kite over them, and let the kite fall on the other side, leaving the string hanging from the chimney. To this string they tie a rope, and draw that up; and after the rope, a rope-ladder, by which they mount to the top.

A wicked thought seems a little thing. It does not hurt, you think; "it is not of any consequence," you say. I tell you it does hurt; it is very serious. It is the little kite that you send up to some bad object. The thought passes off, and you believe it is done with. You are mistaken. See! there is a little thread fastening you to that wicked thing which you wanted to reach. Wish it again, and you will find yourself nearer to it. The thread has grown into a ladder, and by and by you will be drawn up, and do that sin which you thought you would like to do.

This is the way in which all the murderers, all the thieves, all the forgers, all the drunkards in the world, have been made. Sometimes men go into the gaol, and talk to the wretched men and women who are locked up that they may do no more mischief. Will you believe it when I tell you that they have most of them been to Sunday-school? They once sat round their teachers as you do, and knelt at prayer, and rose up to sing. How did they go wrong? They began with a bad thought, a bad wish. One said, "I should like to do as Jones does—to stay out as late at night, and to go where he goes." Another said, "I wish I had as much money as Fred, I would not be particular how I spent it." The one became a low, loose wretch, and the other a bold thief. Beware, children, of sin; even of wishing to sin. Jesus can take all your sins away, and keep them away. Ask Him. Try Him.

One night there was a fire at a clergyman's house in the

country. The mother, the father, and all the family but one had got out half-dressed, and stood outside. The flames were bursting from some of the windows, and it was thought that nothing else could be saved. Somebody looks round and says, "Where's John? he is not here. O! he is in the house still. God spare him!" Two fellows run right under the house. One mounts the other's shoulders, and reaching a bed-room



window, lifts down the little trembling boy. The father and mother, the brothers and sisters, would have been dreadfully distressed if Johnny had not been saved—if they had found his body all blackened and burnt among the ruins. But no one else would have thought it very serious, or felt it very much for that particular little boy to have been burnt to death. Yet the little fellow was very valuable. He lived to preach thousands of times,

and to convert thousands of men and women. He was John Wesley.

Children, we ought to be as anxious about you as Wesley's father and mother were about the boy in that burning house. It is not a little thing that you should stop in sin. I would cry "Danger." Sin scorches, consumes, withers up. It is not a little thing that you should be drawn out and saved. You might become great missionaries, great preachers, great writers, and save many others. Would that be a little thing? Say out of your hearts, "Jesus, pity me, forgive me, take me out of sin." Amen.



TWICE HEALED.



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WALK where Christ walked.—A beautiful lake.—Ruins.—A storm hushed.—From Nazareth to Capernaum.—A respectable congregation.—A helpless man.—The reward of doing good.—A son saved from drowning.—What a tear did.—Let through the roof.—Sins forgiven.—We have sinned against God.—Seeing half Christ's power.—Moses' rod.—The second cure.—The sick man restored.—Praise to Jesus.

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### TWICE HEALED: A SCENE AT CAPERNAUM.

ST. LUKE v. 17—26.

WE are going this afternoon to follow the greatest and noblest Man who ever lived; to walk where He walked; to hear His words, to see His deeds. Let us step softly.

We will stand on a flat shore while the clear, bright waters of a lake roll at our feet. The hills over yonder, six or seven miles away, rise up from the water steep and solemn. The lake seems to be twelve or thirteen miles long. There are hills behind us and beyond us; the whole lake seems laid in their green arms, as if they would hide it. How still everything is! how sacred! We will move along the shore to these broken stones. Ah! a stork is wading through the water as if on stilts among the reeds and the bright pink oleanders, and now flapping his heavy wings, flies off. Why, these stones, these broken walls, these low, damp arches, must be the ruins of large buildings and of a large town! Yes, *this is all that is left of Capernaum, once a famous city.*



And this lake is the Sea of Galilee. It was its waves, that are now so idle that one night long ago were hissing round a fishing-boat, and so terrified the sailors that they awoke a Passenger they had on board. He no sooner saw the danger than He said, "Peace, be still!" The angry waves fell back ashamed, and there was but just enough breeze to bring the boat ashore. You know that Passenger was Christ the Lord. In those days, round this lake nestled many a town and village, the shores were covered with nets and timbers, and the waters were all alive with boats.

At Nazareth, where Jesus had grown up, the people had treated Him ungratefully. They had sneered at Him even in the synagogue, and had said He was only the carpenter's Son. He had left Nazareth, that beautiful place over yonder hills, and was staying in Capernaum, which He called "His own city." All Capernaum was moved about this wonderful Man Who had come into their midst. Jesus could not walk down the street but He would have a crowd following Him, and He must stop at every corner to heal a poor afflicted creature.

One day, Christ had a more respectable congregation than He sometimes preached to. Perhaps He was sitting in some large room of the nobleman or the centurion, for the place was filled with merchants and Scribes, who would not be likely to sit in a fisherman's hut to hear a sermon. So many came to hear His teaching, that they filled the room, and blocked up the doorway, and stood looking over one another's shoulders, right out into the street.

And somebody that was not invited is coming. There is a poor man at the other end of the town who has lain for many months crouched up in one corner of his cottage. He is palsied; he is so helpless, that when he is hungry some one must feed him, and when he gets up somebody must lift him. He had seen little and heard little, hidden away there in a close room, but, thank God! he had heard one thing. Some friend had told him of the miracles that were being done, and that no cripple need despair.

What a glorious thing it was that the palsied man was not left without friends who could tell him about Christ, and bring him to Him! Children, do not be tired of doing little acts of *kindness*; you "shall in no wise lose" your "reward." Jesus *says so, and I think He knows.* Those kind and helpful things



*Christ stilling the Tempest.*

you do day after day shall all be repaid, and an act of love may bear unexpected and wonderful fruit.

A merchant had gone into the country for the benefit of his health. One evening he was sitting on the terrace of the house just above the river, when there was a sad accident. A young man whom the merchant did not know at the time was riding down the road. The horse was very furious, and at last the young man was thrown off into the river. There was no time

to be lost if the young man was to be saved. The river was swift, and was carrying him down. The merchant was a good swimmer, but he was not as strong as he generally was. Still, he could not see the young man die. He plunged into the water, and just as the young man's strength was going, and he was sinking, he was caught up and brought to the bank. Think of the joy of the merchant as he kissed the wet face, and saw who it was. "O!" said he, "what a reward this is. It is my son, and I have saved his life."

You say, some of you that love Him, that you cannot do much for Jesus. You can do a great deal; you can tell some child about Christ, at least; you can pray on behalf of some one to Christ. There is a little girl I know, of seven or eight summers, who teaches a family as much about obeying and loving Jesus as any sermons do. Would you believe it—a tear from a child, a prayer from a child, has saved many a man.

There was a gentleman giving a lecture some years ago near London. There was a man listening with his arm put round a little girl. During his speech the lecturer said, "Everybody has influence, even the child." And as he said so, he pointed to the little girl I have spoken of.

"That's true," cried the man. At the close he came up to the lecturer, and said to him, "I beg your pardon, Sir, but I could not help speaking. I was a drunkard, but as I did not like to go to the public-house by myself, I used to carry this child. As I got near the public-house one night, hearing a great noise inside, she said, 'Don't go, father!' 'Hold your tongue, child.' 'Please, father, don't go.' 'Hold your tongue, I say.' Presently I felt a big tear fall on my cheek. I could not go a step farther, Sir. I turned round and went home, and have not been in a public-house since, thank God for it. I am now a happy man, Sir, and this little girl has done it all."

You cannot see the image of the sun so clear and bright in the wide sea, as you can in one little dew-drop.

"If you have not gold and silver  
Ever ready at command;  
If you cannot to the needy  
Reach an ever open hand;  
You can visit the afflicted,  
O'er the erring you can weep,  
You can be a true disciple,  
Sitting at the Saviour's feet."

The poor man whom we are watching had friends who were ready to take him to Christ. And so that day you might have met four strong men carrying on a litter this feeble, paralyzed creature. They reach the front of the house where Jesus is teaching. They try to enter, but no! they cannot get to the door. They are told, too, that the house is filled with Scribes and Pharisees, with men in silk robes and jewels, and it is no day for them.

Then they have a daring idea—they say they might let him through the roof. This was not so difficult as you might imagine. They could reach the roof without going through the room. Now, with much pains, and with many a groan from the sick man, they are all upon the roof. Before those inside have time to interfere, or to know exactly what all the stir above them means, there is a good-sized opening made in the roof, and the mattress is let down into the room below. Jesus “saw their faith.” Yes, He did not complain of His sermon being interrupted, He did not notice the frowns the Scribes gave. He only saw the faith in His love and His help which the afflicted man and his friends had shown. Did Christ say, “Why could not you wait for Me in the street, and stop Me there?” No! kindly He speaks to the paralyzed, “Son, be of good cheer; *thy sins be forgiven thee.*” Christ has no sooner said this, than the bearded Jews standing round look at each other seriously. You would not have understood just what those looks and those knitted eyebrows meant; but Jesus knew. He knew that those around were thinking, “Why, this Man is a blasphemer; He pretends to be equal with God, and to forgive sins.” And the Scribes were quite right in believing that only God could pardon sin. Let me give you one reason why you should look nowhere else for forgiveness but to God.

*Against God have we sinned.*—Many of our sins rise up in our own hearts, and die out there because we have not the chance to do them. A complaint against God often swells up in your breasts; a hard, cruel word against Him often comes choking into your throat, and passes no farther. If we speak to any one but God about these things, we cannot be understood. Suppose, my little girl, you have taken away your mother's locket that reminds her of a friend she has long missed, and *you have lost it*; will you go to your father and tell him? No,

he might not know much about the treasure; he would take you to your mother. Now, when we have lost something of God's,—lost a good temper, lost a holy feeling, lost time, lost everything,—we will, we *must*, go to God, and He will forgive.

Jesus wanted to show to these Scribes and Pharisees that He was God, and none other; so He spoke those God-like words, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." How blind these men were that they could not believe Jesus was God! There is said to be a disease of the eyes by which men can only see the halves of things; a tree to them would be cut in two; a man would be standing up without legs. These Scribes seemed to be afflicted in a similar way in their minds. They could only see one half of Christ's power. They thought sometimes He must be God, when the lame jumped up at His call; but they did not believe Him to be so truly God as to forgive sins.

Moses' rod was a very wonderful thing. How it divided the waters and the sea fell back! That was a great miracle. When the rock was smitten by the rod out in the hot desert, and the stream of fresh water rushed out, the people did not wonder so much. Why? Because they had seen the other great things which had been done by means of the rod.

And these Scribes, who knew Christ could heal without medicine, ought not to have been surprised when Jesus said to the palsied man, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." That was Christ's first cure upon the sick man. Now for the second. It was just as easy. Jesus went on to say, "That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house."

The man's dull eye has brightened, his thin cheeks are flushed, his muscles have grown strong on his arms. He has sprung off his mattress; his voice would be loud, only it is rather choked with tears; he has put his couch on his shoulders, and the crowd cry, "make way for him." It is too much for the Scribes, this is. "Wonderful!" "He's a prophet!" "God has sent Him!" This is what they say. The crafty Jews who hated Him are giving the Saviour praise. Shall not we?

"Hail, Thou once-despised Jesus!  
Hail, Thou Galilean King!  
Thou didst suffer to release us;  
Thou didst free salvation bring."

Children, Jesus would draw you up to Him if you were poor diseased, wasted creatures, like the wretched man on the mattress. How much more is He wanting to save you now!



*Christ Blessing Little Children.*

## THE LOST SHEEP.

### AN OUTLINE.



THE lost sheep.—Its danger.—The shepherd's search and success.—The Good Shepherd.—Lost in the Black Forest.—God's love to the wandering.—The boy who left home.—Laid on "God's shoulders."

## THE LOST SHEEP.

LUKE XV. 4-6.

Go into the hill-country south of Jerusalem : there, on some hill-side, a shepherd stands. You can see him going round his little flock and counting his sheep. He has been away at his dwelling, or maybe he has taken a longer time than usual over his simple meal down under the olives. He counts ninety-nine ! There is one missing ! he is persuaded of it, for he has gone over the flock again. What a silly sheep ! With the rest of the flock it would have been safe enough, now it is unprotected. Not far hence is a steep rock, from which it might have slipped ; yonder there is a deep bog, where it might be helplessly struggling. There are hungry, howling dogs from the city abroad. Foxes and wolves may steal out from their coverts. There is no time to be lost.

The shepherd, whose own sheep these are, sets out after the wanderer. It is a long search. Night comes on, and the sky is dark with tempest, and the wind comes up hoarse and keen. *The shepherd hears the sharp, short bay of the wolves in the distance, just as a gentle, plaintive bleat sounds close to him.*



*The Good Shepherd.*

There, tired out, and bruised with its falls, lies the truant sheep. The shepherd, too full of pity to strike or chide, only too glad to think that before he gave up the search he found the wanderer.



takes the sheep in his arms. He never throws off his burden until he shows it with pride to his family and friends. It could not follow the shepherd; it was too weak and too far from the fold to get back.

"All we like sheep have gone astray." But ours is "the Good Shepherd," Who "giveth His life for the sheep." We should all have been devoured, but Jesus threw Himself between us and our enemies, and they tore Him instead of you and me. If one of you were the little child of a German woodman, and lived on the edge of the "Black Forest," you would have many cautions not to leave the meadow about the house. But suppose one day you stole off from your brothers and sisters, and gathering sweet wild fruit as you went, the great trunks of the forest trees shut you in, and you lost sight of your home and the faces of your playmates. When you had missed your way and the wood got darker and thicker, you would run this way and that, and scream your father's name, but only startle the hares, and make the pheasants rise up from your feet. O how cold, wretched, and helpless! They are all up at home! Who distresses them? Whom do they feel for? not Fritz and Hans who are safe in the house. They can only think of you; you, lost and unprotected. Do they sleep till to-morrow? do they leave you to chance? No! a band of men is beating the woods, your father among them; and here he is, pushing through the underwood to you, uttering a cry of delight, and folding you in his strong arms.

What God wants to teach us is that His love is warmer and quicker to those that are in danger than those that are safe in His fold. He wants to show that He follows with a tender heart every step of a poor wandering sheep. O, if men had this picture put plainly before them, we cannot think they would stray so far and so long as they do! They have, we all have, some sort of notion that God cannot forget deep wrongs, and if we should turn to Him, He would receive us coldly. We are like the disobedient and ungrateful lad that in an hour of passion left his home. He now lodges in a dirty London garret, or sails with a reckless crew in some old vessel, far away from his parents, who he thinks can never receive such a wild and wilful character again. Yet all this time his father never looks round upon his brothers and sisters without thinking of his *absent boy*—the boy who ran away. He never prays at night

but his voice grows tenderer when he asks that he may be permitted to see him once more.

My dear children, whose hearts are even now following their own courses, will you not turn, and fall into God's care, when you know He follows hard after you? God has no weapon to punish you, not a frown to chill you, but gentle words to soften you, and a hand to fold tenderly about you! "He layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing." Is it not delightful to be told that God, instead of forgiving us with a grudge, instead of finding it hard to pardon our offences, lays us "on His shoulders, rejoicing?" It is such different treatment from what the disobedient expect, or what they receive in the world, that they can scarcely believe it. It is like none but God. Come, let us take Him at His word. All our doubts, all our fears, and all our carelessness ought to have been removed by these truths. Let us be ready and anxious that He should save us. Amen.



## JESUS IN THE HOUSE.



JESUS at all times. — Wrong ideas about Him. — Jesus when a boy. — A visitor at an orphanage. — A walk to Bethany. — A house which Jesus visited. — The Saviour received by Martha. — Waiting dinner. — Martha's complaint. — Not the last visit. — Raising Lazarus. — A house without Jesus. — What a Sunday-school boy did. — Three things :  
 (1.) Jesus will not come as a stranger — One must love Him — The Saviour brought to the blind girl. — (2.) Jesus comes, whoever invites Him — A child may invite Him — The boy who brought the missionary home. — (3.) Jesus stays as long as He is welcome.

## JESUS IN THE HOUSE.

"A certain woman named Martha received Him into her house." — LUKE x 38.

Jesus in the house ! Is that nice ? is that right ? You like to think of Jesus in the chapel or church. You thank a teacher who seems to bring you to Jesus in the Sunday-school. But Jesus in the house, always, too ; do you like that ? When the blinds are drawn, and a little brother lies dead, and your mother is putting together the toys that he will never more use, then you think about Christ, and want Him to dry your tears. When the merry Christmas comes round, and the fire is large and bright, and your cousins have dropped in, and you sit down to have a game, would your faces grow any longer if you thought Jesus had appeared ?

Children, there are those who seem to believe that Jesus is

*Martha, Mary, and Jesus in the House.*

all very well at a funeral, but ought not to be invited to a wedding. I hope you are not among these people. I hope you would as soon see Jesus when you are running about the house, and getting your baskets ready for a grand black-berrying, as you would if your sister lay ill, and you were walking about on tip-toes. I wonder where these people who do not care for Christ get their notions of Him. What do *you* think about Him? Do you think He ever smiled? Do you *think* He ever played under the fig-trees at Nazareth when He

was a boy? Do you think He ever hummed a hymn when He came tripping down the hill at the back of His parents' house, and the sheep trotted out of the road, and the pigeons flew out of the trees? I believe He did. I think Jesus is so pleasant that He is good company at any time. We should say nothing but that which Jesus ought to hear. We should have no game without Jesus watching us, as He loved to watch the "children playing in the market." We should not sit down to dinner without Jesus at the table.

One evening, at an orphanage in Germany, the children had sat down to supper, and one of the boys asked the usual blessing, beginning, "Come, Lord Jesus, be our Guest." A little fellow looked up, and said, "Do tell me why the Lord Jesus never comes. We ask Him every day to sit with us, and He never comes." "Dear child, only believe, and you may be sure He will come, for He does not despise our invitation," said the gentleman at the head of the table. "I shall set Him a seat," replied the little fellow, quickly, and pushed out a chair. Just then there was a knock at the door. A poor frozen apprentice crept in, begging a night's lodging. He was made welcome; the chair stood empty for him; every child wanted him to have his supper, and one was very sorry that his bed was too small for the stranger. The little one had been thinking hard all this time, "Jesus could not come, and so He sent this poor boy in His place. Is that it?"

Jesus was there, though He did not sit down in the chair. He was there, teaching them to be charitable and loving. He was there, just as He would come to your house, and fill you with joy and gentleness, and show you how to treat the poor and miserable.

You would like to know of some house at which Jesus has stayed, and what He has done there. Let me take you to one. It is two miles' walk from Jerusalem; over the little brook, past the vineyards, up the Mount of Olives, with glorious views of the city behind, past the scattered shepherds' huts, over some higher ground, and down there, in the deep green of the trees, lies Bethany. Jesus comes into the village. He is well known now. The children run back into the houses, and say, "Here's the Prophet from Jerusalem." That is one of the largest houses in Bethany. Most likely it had a porch towards the street, and if the doors had been thrown open, and you could

have looked to the back of the house, you would, perhaps, have seen garden-walks, fig-trees, and pomegranates. A lady, a widow, I believe, lived there, and with her a younger sister, and a brother. Jesus is seen, and sent for; Martha, for that is the name of the lady who keeps the house, receives the Lord at the door. It may be she says to Him, "Master, I have heard of You. My brother has listened to You at Jerusalem. We think very highly of You as 'One sent from God.' Will You let us have the honour of entertaining You?"

Jesus follows Martha inside, and washes the dust from His feet, and the sweat from His hands. Then He sits down, waiting for dinner. Martha is bustling about, spreading the table. It is not a crust and a draught of water this time. The dinner is good, and Martha knows how to get it up. Her sister all the time is talking to Jesus. He is answering her questions, He is leaning over to her, His face is pleased and interested. Martha is hardly satisfied. There is a little crossness on her face, as she carries in the dishes, and watches her sister; and at last she says, "Lord, bid her that she help me." Don't think that it was with anger, but gently and kindly, Jesus told her she was taking too much trouble, and Mary, her sister, was not wasting the time. And now it is all over, and Lazarus, the brother, has come in, and Martha is in her place at the head of the table, and there is not a face without a smile. This was not the last visit Jesus paid to Martha's house. When the lawyers had been questioning Him, and the Scribes had been sneering at Him, and the afternoons had been long and hot, then it was a pleasant walk over the hill to Bethany. May be they watched for His coming. Perhaps Mary went up on the roof of the house, and shaded her eyes from the western sun when it was lying low on the mountain, and waited till He came in sight.

Do you think the evenings were miserable when Jesus was there? Do you think Jesus always lectured them, and never talked to them like a dear Friend and a Brother? Those evenings were the happiest when He walked in. Those mornings were the brightest when He was out in the garden looking down on the wild road towards Jericho, and then came in and said grace at breakfast.

Nor did Jesus stay away in darker days. He came when

there was an empty place at the table. He came when their tomb in the rock had been opened, and they had carried Lazarus there. Jesus came then. He stood in front of the tomb, and when He called, death was afraid, and gave back Lazarus to sit again in the house and talk once more with the Saviour.

This is Jesus! and this is what He did in a house He visited. And you have been afraid of Him, and been shy towards Him, and thought you wouldn't be happy if He came to you! There are some of you who think better of Him now, I hope. There are some of you who perhaps feel that, after all, it would be pleasant to "receive Jesus into your house," as Martha did. Do any of you belong to a house which Jesus has never visited? Then you are not worse off than a boy I was lately reading about.

The boy was a scholar at a Sunday-school. His father kept a gin-shop, and was a wicked, drunken man. You cannot think what a miserable home that was. But the boy let Jesus into his own heart, and then of course Jesus went home with him. He asked his teacher what he should do. His father would want him to wait on the customers again, and he felt he could not do it. Had he not better leave home? he asked. His teacher told him not to leave home, but to begin to pray for his father, and she would pray for both of them. In a few weeks there was a great change at that house. The father left off drinking, and directly after he shut up the shop and ceased to sell. He found some other work by which he got an honest living. When telling all about it, his face was wet with tears.

"Something has been the matter with my dear boy for some time, and the other day I heard a noise in the room where he sleeps. It was a sort of mournful noise, and I listened. What do you think? he was praying for me. He prayed that I would quit selling; for I had ceased to drink some time before. I felt I was doing wrong, and I've left it all; and the next time you have a meeting, I am coming with my boy."

Would you like the dear Saviour to come to you and to your home? Then I want you to remember three things.

1. *Jesus will not come as a stranger.*—Jesus will not remain in a house where He knows nobody, and where He has not a friend. Did you ever expect to find Jesus in a house where nobody

loves Him? You may have found a beer-bottle there, or a packet of cards, or a box of dice, or a dirty boy, or an untidy girl, but you didn't think for a minute of hearing anything about Jesus. Let one of them make friends with the Saviour. Will Jesus stay away from the house then? You know He will not. No matter who it is that has made Jesus a Friend, Jesus will go home with him. It may be poor little Jane who has been a cripple so long. Or it may be Grandfather, wiping his spectacles, with the Bible on the table before him.

Come and look into this little whitewashed cottage with the vine leaves over it, near a city in the south of France. We will go in with a gentleman who carries a travelling bag. There is the mother doing some ironing, and a boy standing. And there sits a young woman, perhaps eighteen years of age, in an old chair, with some straw at her feet which she is going to plait for hats. What is she doing? She is holding a large Book to her face with no printing on the leaves, but raised letters. The Book, you know, is a Bible for the blind. And Marie — that is her name — is blind. But what a joy seems to be on her face! She is reading the Bible, *with her lips!* How glad they all are to see the gentleman who entered. He sits down and talks to Marie, who says, with her sightless eyes turned up to him, "Is it not blessed to kiss the sweet words as I read?" Let me tell you how it was that Marie got her Bible, and learnt to read it with her lips.

A year before, the gentleman we have spoken of, who was preaching in the neighbourhood, went into the house for the first time. He sat and spoke to Marie about Jesus, and the way in which He pitied and cured the blind beggar who cried to Him. Marie was touched, and longed to have a Bible. The gentleman directed her to a good man in the city, a friend of his, who was teaching a few of the blind, and before the day was out brought her a Bible. Next morning, Marie set off to the city, with her brother for a guide, to receive her first lesson. She tried hard to make out the difference in the letters, but could not. Always plaiting straw, had made her fingers too thick and hard. Poor girl! how disappointed she was. One day as she sat at home, a thought came to her. Could she not cut away the thick skin from the ends of her fingers, and feel then? She tried it, and the next time she had a lesson, the blood trickled out of her fingers on the page. After all, it



would not do. Poor Marie! she felt she must take the Book back, for some one else to read. She one day knelt down to pray about it. This was what she prayed:—"I can see Thee with my heart, dear Jesus, and Thou knowest that I love Thee and love Thy Book." She raised the open Book up to her lips to kiss it. What joy! why, she could feel the shape of the letters well with her lips. It was all easy then; she could read God's Word!

You see the Saviour did not enter Marie's cottage without a friend. The stranger was His friend and companion. So may you and I do good. If you love the Saviour, He will walk where you walk, and follow you into any home.

2. *Jesus comes, whoever invites Him.*—Is it true that Jesus will go at the call of any one who sincerely wants Him? Yea. May a child invite the Saviour into a house? Yea. Who has the right to give the invitations to dinner or tea at your house? Only your father or mother, you say. But who has the right to ask Jesus in? You have; any of you; the youngest of you. You are not obliged to wait a long time, or know a great deal about the Saviour, before you ask Him to go with you. You need not make the house tidy and comfortable before you can expect Jesus to enter. Suppose your hearts are drawn towards Him this afternoon, (although you never before thought much about Him,) and your eyelids are falling, and you breathe a prayer, "Jesus, wilt Thou kindly follow me home: we want Thee sadly?" Then He will hear your invitation, He will consider it enough, He will go home with you. If you will let Him, He will forgive you, save you, make you happy, and remain with you. Dr. Newton, in his new book, "Nature's Mighty Wonders," tells a story which illustrates what I am saying:—

"One of the missionaries of the American Sunday-School Union had just organized a school in a destitute neighbourhood. . . . After the school was dismissed, a boy came up to him, and asked him what he meant at the end of his prayer, by saying 'for Jesus' sake.' Then he told him 'the old, old story of Jesus and His love.' He told him how He suffered and died, and how His great loving heart was broken with grief as He hung upon the Cross, and all because He loved us so much, and wanted to save us from our sins. The boy listened with wonder while the missionary was telling him all this. When

he heard what Jesus had done, his only reply was these two words, 'Did He?' Then dropping his eyes, he walked away to his father's house. It was a house without prayer. A Bible was never seen in it. There he repeated, as well as he could, what the missionary had told him. His mother asked him more questions about it than he could answer.

"Just wait, mother, and I'll ask the missionary to come. He can tell you all about it."

"Away he ran after the missionary, and asked him to come and tell his mother all that he had told him. The man went. His visit to that house brought a blessing to it; and now the Bible is read there every day, and family prayer is offered to God."

3. *Jesus stays as long as He is welcome.*—He will stay no longer than that. If you do things of which you are ashamed, and think that for Christ to be near is troublesome, the dear Lord will depart. But it is not often that He is turned away from a house where He has been staying. He makes such a difference where He visits; He brings so much comfort with Him, that people like Him to remain. Yes! He will be with you as long as you have a little wish left that He should stay. Your brothers may leave home, and your sisters go out to service, but Jesus will still be there. The furniture may go, and you may sit round a small fire, and say, "Aren't we very poor?" but Jesus will be among you. You may bury your oldest brother, and follow your mother to the graveyard, but when you come back to the quiet house, you shall find Jesus there, saying, "Be not afraid, for I am with thee." O! take the Saviour to your hearts and to your homes. Amen.



## HIDDEN THINGS.



**F**INDING out hidden things.—Nothing is lost.—How coal is formed.—(1.) The good that is hidden shall be made known—Beautiful scenes—The gold-fields and diamond-fields found out—A collier boy, and what he does—Lazarus—All God's treasures to be gathered—The soldier of Pompeii—Churchyards are cities.—(2.) The sin that is hidden to be made known—(1.) *To ourselves.* Windows in the heart—The swearer—Sinners are poisoners.—(II.) *To others.* The air stirred—Heaven seeing—Some things not secret—The plasterer—A thief dreadfully punished.—Conclusion.

## HIDDEN THINGS.

"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known."—MATTHEW x. 26.

We seem to be always finding out hidden things. You learn to read, don't you, so that you may know what is hidden in books? Men look at the stars through telescopes, in order to search out the wonders of the sky above us. Brave fellows have set out in ships, and after long voyages, have found lands where fruits, and trees, and birds and insects stranger than ours, are seen. Recollect, there is nothing lost in the world. Things are only hidden. The sun when it passes from us at night, *has gone* to light another part of the world, and somebody over in New Zealand is saying, "O! the sun is rising." Thousands

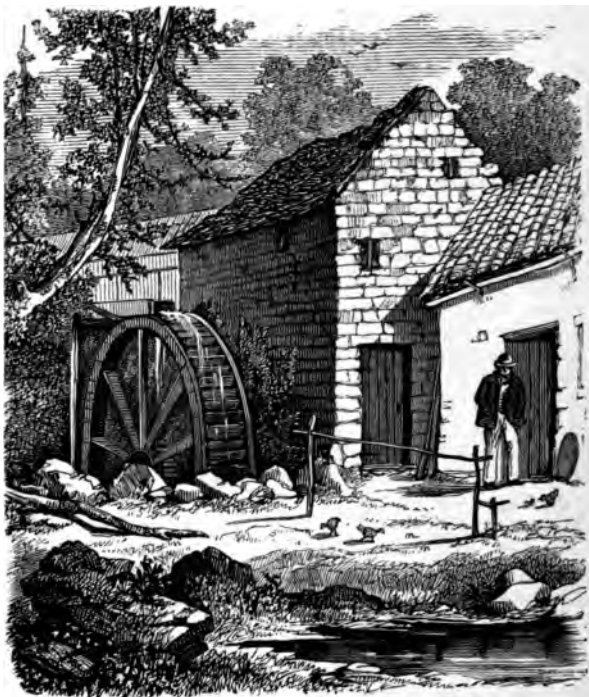
of years ago there were great woods and swamps on the earth, where reptiles rustled among the tree-ferns. Floods and earthquakes came, and the woods were no more to be seen. Had they perished? No! they had only been *covered*. These trees have sunk lower, and gone hard and black, and now they serve us for coal! Whenever you see a piece of coal, think of its history; and may it bring to you the truth, "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed." I want to show you that both what is good and what is sinful shall be made known.

1. *The good that is hidden shall be made known.*—Much of what is beautiful in the world, lies up among the hills and away in deep hollows difficult to reach. In Wales, I have sometimes left the smooth road where the coaches run along, and have followed up into the mountains a fussy little brook that turned a mill-wheel by the road-side. And what beauty was up there! The brook came leaping over the steep rocks, falling from shelf to shelf, and sending out showers that fed the sweetest ferns. Over all the nut boughs met, and the birds warbled to each other from the branches. Yet all such delightful places are at last found out, and every train and coach brings to them visitors.

There was a time when no one dreamed about gold-fields in Australia, and the lonely hunters there wondered what shining yellow dust it was that was scattered by their horses' hoofs as they rode. You would have thought that the diamonds were safe, and no one would have brought them away, when they lay like little brown pebbles at the foot of a mountain in the wilds of Africa. But these things could not be hidden. There are thousands of men now at these far-off places working away with pick and mattock to find gold and diamonds. Even the oysters are disturbed in their sleep in the Indian Ocean, and snatched up because they hold in their mouths the beautiful pearl.

There is a boy working down in a pit. He is dressed in a ragged flannel jacket like others; at night, when he comes up from work, and trudges home, his face is smeared and his jacket dirty. You take him to be no better than his companions; but he is a gem among boys. His companions would tell you "He's a civil, quiet chap." He is more than that; he holds the "pearl

of great price" which Jesus gave to him, and will give to us all if we ask. Very few people know him. His Sunday-school teacher admires him, and perhaps his Minister has shaken hands with him, but beyond these he is unknown. Wait a little. If



*The Water-Mill.*

an hour of darkness come, see how he will shine. Some morning he may be at work in the dark roads that have been cut out of the coal, half a mile from the bottom of the pit-shaft, when

the cry is passed from mouth to mouth, "The water's in." Picking away, two or three of the men have tapped some old places filled with water. The water rushed out in a great stream, it knocked down those in the road, and carried them away. Now its black waters are stealing up where our young friend is at work. A dozen men have come up with it in dripping clothes. Now our young friend's character comes out. We said he was a pearl among boys, and now look at him. "We'd better pray, Jim," he says to the man nearest to him; and while the water is rising inch by inch, the boy's broken voice speaks to God for them. He sings with them, he intercedes for them, till the dark waters choke his last loving word. No one is left to tell the story, but when the water is pumped out, they find among the bodies cold and stiff, a tin can with these words rudely scratched upon it:—

"Mother, tell them we died praying and singing, and I wasn't a bit afraid. Jesus was near. JOHN ROBERTS."

So the world knows John Roberts, the collier boy, and how he lived and died. "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed."

Suppose John Roberts meets with no accident, and grows up to be a man. Suppose he teaches his children how to be honest and good, and dies on his own bed at home, with his thin hands placed among his children's curls, while he leaves them with God. Will the world talk about him? Not yet. We must wait till the great judgment before the man's love to Jesus is made known. Not only his own townsmen, and his own countrymen, but the great world, shall see him, and Jesus shall say, "This is the pearl I found in one of earth's coal-pits."

Recollect a sovereign is worth twenty shillings, if it has been hidden away in a cellar. Lazarus was covered with rags, like a miser's gold, and lay neglected at a gate; but God knew he was there, and took him to heaven, where he would be valued. There is a day coming when Jesus will gather together all His treasures—those that love Him—from every place in which they lie. "There is nothing....hid, that shall not be known."

A beautiful story is told about the uncovering of the city of Pompeii, which had been buried and forgotten one thousand seven hundred years. You know that a volcano burst out, and buried the city with hot ashes and cinders. It is said that those who were digging came upon the place in which the magistrates met. There was only one skeleton found, and that was of a soldier in armour at the door. It was supposed that the soldier had been told to guard the entrance. Though every one else fled when the volcano which was at hand poured streams of fire and cinder into the streets, yet the soldier would not. He died at his post, doing his duty, while the hot streams closed him in, rather than save himself by flight. For seventeen hundred years the secret was kept, but at last it was known, and the soldier's courage admired.

There are buried cities all about us. Did you ever think of it? Every churchyard is a buried city, full of people, but all lying silent, with their arms meekly folded on their breasts. One day these cities shall be uncovered. Then Jesus shall come, and shall tell in an instant which of the dead died while doing their duty. Those of you who are loving Jesus, who are trying with all your young hearts to do as He wishes, Jesus will point out, and say, "This is Mine." Be encouraged, my child, praying and working away. Whoever forgets you, Jesus does not. "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed."

2. *The sin that is hidden shall be made known.*—You are more likely to hide what harm you do than what good you do, are you not?

The sin that we have covered shall be made known, (1) *to ourselves*. Some call it "clever" to deceive, "jolly" to be drunk, "manly" to swear. O! some day they shall see that these things are dreadful. In Greece, long ago, a wise man thought that if a window could be let into every person's breast, so that he could see the wickedness of his own heart, the world would be better. Only God gives us these windows. I will tell you how God put a window into a swearer's heart, so that he could see the wickedness of his oaths:—

A gentleman once heard a labouring man swearing dreadfully in the presence of a number of his companions. He told him it was a cowardly thing to swear so, in company with others,

when he dared not do it by himself. The man said he was not afraid to swear at any time, or in any place.

"I'll give you two sovereigns," said the gentleman, "if you will go into the village graveyard at twelve o'clock to-night, and swear the same oaths you have just uttered here, then, when you are alone with God."

"Agreed," said the man; "it's an easy way of earning two sovereigns."

"Well, you come to me to-morrow, and say you have done it, and the money is yours."

The time passed on. The hour of midnight came. The man went to the graveyard. It was a night of pitchy darkness. As he entered the graveyard, not a sound was heard: all was as still as death. Then the gentleman's words, "Alone with God," came over him with wonderful power. The thought of the wickedness of what he had been doing, and what he had come there to do, darted across his mind like the lightning's flash. He trembled at his folly. Afraid to take another step, he fell upon his knees; and, instead of the dreadful oaths he came to utter, the earnest cry went up, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The next day he went to the gentleman, and thanked him for what he had done, and said he had resolved never to swear another oath as long as he lived.

Children, think if you go on sinning, how much mischief you may do by the time you are old! What dreadful things you must then be accused of! You may start when I tell you that you may become poisoners. I do not mean you will mix up some deadly drink, and hand it to some one. I mean this. You may poison a soul. You may whisper to an innocent creature how he may commit some sin, and that soul may do it and perish. You may not think at the time of the wrong you are doing; but at last, at the judgment, you would have to answer for being a poisoner. "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed."

The evil we do shall be made known (2) *to others*. We are surrounded with a great "cloud of witnesses," says St. Paul. That means people who are looking at us and telling of us. The eyes of God, of devils, of angels, and of men, are all upon us. Philosophers think that the light which surrounds us tells tales of us. How solemn it is to imagine that if I should strike some



one in my passion, all heaven will see the blow! Remember, my boy, that heaven contains that sister you lost. Don't forget, my girl, that your mother, whom they buried up, is among those blessed spirits. You would not like her to see you turning away Jesus. Of one thing we are quite sure, that God sees. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place."

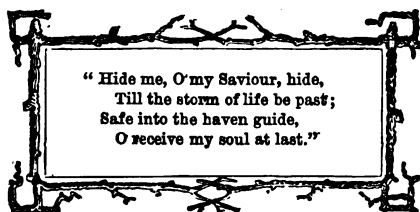
Some things that are done cannot be kept secret. Suppose I bore down in the earth till I get to the beds of coal, and then begin to draw out the coal. You could not see the colliers I sent down there, but you would soon know what I was doing. The field from beneath which I was taking the coal would sink and open. Don't think you can lose all the goodness that is within you without its being noticed. You will hear of some neighbour saying, "How wicked John is getting: my boy shall have nothing to do with him."

A man was once plastering a room. The plaster he was using was almost without colour; it was not until it dried that it became white and hard. The man was dishonest; and as he was alone, he opened a drawer, and turned over a pocket-book. He found nothing valuable in the pocket-book, and put it carefully back, thinking no one would know it had been disturbed. But he forgot that he had touched it with his wet fingers. In a short time the owner saw the book, all stained with the white marks of the plasterer's fingers, and the attempt to steal was found out!

Children, it is dangerous to sin. To tell a lie, to steal a penny, to disobey God, will leave dirty finger-marks upon you. Jesus will see those marks: He will take them away, wipe them off, if you pray Him. Happy it will be if your friends and the world do not discover the stains. I was reading the other day of a dreadful punishment which followed a thief. A person belonging to a bank was taking some trouble to open a great safe in the cellars which had not been unlocked for many years. When the door opened, a skeleton fell out. It was the skeleton of a wretched man who had broken into the bank to steal. He had opened the safe, and got within it, when the heavy door closed upon him, and no one heard his cries. "There is nothing hid, that shall not be known."

The lives of some men are written on earth. The lives of *all of us* are being written up by God. The stories must be read

out, page after page, when the secrets of all hearts are open. These are very solemn thoughts. Only try to keep sin from your hearts, trusting Jesus to wash out any stain as it falls, and you need not be afraid of that day when there will be "nothing covered, that shall not be revealed."



## HIS LIFE FOR MINE.

SUFFERINGS WE HAVE CAUSED.



HE boy who killed his schoolfellow.—  
A city at night.—A walk.—Among  
the olive-trees.—One in distress.—  
The soldiers entering.—Got Him at  
last.—The high-priest's and council  
hall.—How the Prisoner is served.—To the  
Governor.—A Brother suffering.—Inside the  
hall.—The Prisoner and the soldiers.—A  
King!—Dying for friends.—The fisher boy.—Dying rather  
than neglect duty.—The pilot.—Only One died for enemies.—  
At the cross.—At the side of the dead Saviour.

## HIS LIFE FOR MINE.

"Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—ROMANS v. 7, 8.

I WOULD not give much for the boy or the girl who likes to make anything suffer, or to see anything suffer. Wouldn't you feel if you saw a horse dragging a heavy cart with a great sore on his shoulder? or if you saw a dog licking the foot that had been broken by a stone? You would pity.

Suppose, though, that your dog was limping from a stone *you* had thrown. Wouldn't you take the trembling creature into your arms, and watch and soothe him, and bind up his wounded limb? You would be sorry, you would be touched, you would *be ready to help*, you would wait and look on between your ~~tears~~, if anybody should be suffering in consequence of you.

If I am not mistaken, I have read about a school-boy who had an ungovernable temper. One day he had been annoyed, and fixing upon a quiet little fellow whom he disliked, he said, "It's you, you sneak." Then he struck him a heavy blow on his temple, and the boy fell. He fell against a kerb-stone, and the little fellow's face grew paler, and in a few minutes his eyes closed over with death. O! how the murderer broke down. How he fell on his knees by the lad's side, and lifted up the cold hands, and pushed up the boy's curls, and sobbed, "Poor, poor Freddy!"

Now I want you to watch One who suffered, because I know that you and I had something to do with it.

Come with me. It is night. The city is very full. The gates are still open, men are moving, and lanterns are gleaming in the streets. On a steep side of the city we will go out by one of the gates, where a little group walked through an hour or two ago. Carefully down this hill! Now we are in a narrow valley, and we step across some little pools which, in the middle of winter, swell to a brook. We are in front of a high, sloping hill. We look back and see the lights in some of the tents outside the city, and the long dark walls with a tower here and there, and we listen to the hum of people. Turning into a hollow under the hill, we find we are in a garden, among somebody's olive-trees. We pass half-a-dozen men sleeping, who take no notice of us, and come upon three others lying down under the trees.



There is another Man beyond—what is He doing? Let us stand away, and watch. We may not look too closely. He seems struck down; His face touches the ground; deep groans and heartrending sighs come from Him. What words are those?—"O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." If we were nearer, we should see He is only a young Man, but He looks perhaps forty-five, so full of pain and care is His heavenly

face. The night is cool, the wind is chilling, yet the face of this Man is wet with a great sweat. If you had seen Him as He threw Himself on the ground for the last time, you would have been alarmed at the thick blood standing on His brow. He has risen now, and has gone to the three men under the trees, and calls them in haste. Hark! look! what are soldiers bursting into the garden about? Are they after Him? Why does He not escape at this end? No! He goes straight



towards them; and some of them, when they see His pale, haggard face, fall backwards. One who isn't a soldier comes up, and puts his lips to His cheek.

"That's He," say the soldiers. They are all up now. Seized Him at last! What has He

done? Your children were fond of Him. He never did anything but good. He is so faint He can scarcely walk. They march to the high-priest's first. Now, before the people are fully astir, they will take Him to the Governor. It would be too long to tell the whole story. Nobody pleaded for Him. There was a man whom He cured at the pool near here, would not he come forward? Where were Mary and Martha from Bethany, over the hill? If they only knew of the trial, they would come and speak for Him. But there was no one. The Governor has allowed those Jews to have their way.

If you had lamed your brother so dreadfully that the doctors had to cut his leg off, wouldn't you stop in the house that day, to see if you could do anything for him, and to ask every few minutes how he was doing?

So just step inside this hall, and think that He Who is suffering is your Brother, and that all is on your account. Who is that with His head down on His breast, and a scarlet dress flowing over His feet? Here is one of the soldiers dragging a long prickly tree up towards Him. They are tearing it up. They are plaiting it into something round, with the prickles and spikes turned inwards. O! they are pressing it on our

Brother's head—He is bleeding from the spikes! Here's another soldier bringing a long reed out of the brook. He puts it in our Brother's hand. There, now, is the crown, and the robe, and the sceptre.

You ignorant, savage soldiers from Joppa, you call Him mockingly "King." You are right now. He is King—a King's Son! He is the Son of God, Who for our sakes "took on Him the form of a servant." With those "stripes" which the soldiers are giving Him—hark at them!—"we are healed," you and I. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Did ever anybody give his life for a friend? One evening in September, 1871, near Forres, in Scotland, seven boys threw some nets into a small boat, and put out to fish. They drew near to land, and prepared to begin to net. The boat was small, and the sea was restless. The boys move to one side of the boat; a wave comes swelling up, and they are all tossed into the water. There! they are all under; they have risen again, and seven heads are dancing on the waves. One of them, named Sutherland, who hasn't seen fourteen years yet,—a boy brave of heart and strong of limb,—is keeping afloat with one hand, while with the other he pushes a little fellow before him to land. Donald is safe now! his shoulders are high above the water, and he is walking out of the reach of the tide. Sutherland doesn't follow. He has swum out again. He reaches another little struggling companion, and pushes him ashore. Two saved! bravo, Sutherland! You must be tired, my boy; walk up the dry beach after John. No! the bright fellow tosses his head up, and is away again. Three saved! four saved! My dear boy, that's enough; you are getting weaker; you cannot stand another venture. Off he goes. He will be lost. No! he is coming once more, and Duncan with him. Our little hero will rest now. There is a warm fire at home, and his mother is peering out of the doorway after him. No! "I must try to save Jamie," he thinks, and the tears mix with the salt water in his eyes as he turns from the beach. He moves slower, his strokes are fewer! They rush in, and meet Jamie; but Sutherland? that brave head has disappeared. The moonlight strayed across, and they saw his white panting face thrown up to heaven, and then he sank. Sutherland saved his friends.

*"He dares and sinks, and dies alone,  
With all the saved in view."*

Did one ever die rather than neglect his duty? Some years ago there was a pilot on Lake Erie, named John Maynard. The passengers on those great lake steamers knew well his weather-beaten face and fearless eye. One hot summer afternoon, when there was hardly a breeze from the shores, the pilot was standing at his helm, and the passengers were chatting and laughing, when there was a puff of smoke from below.

"Go down and see what that smoke is," said the captain to the nearest hand.

The man was soon up again, pale and out of breath as he cried, "Capt'n, the ship's on fire."

Down to the cabins and along the decks ran the words, "The ship's on fire," and five hundred people on board heard it. Everybody who could carry a bucket laid hold of one, and floods of water were thrown below, but the passengers soon had to run from the blinding smoke and the red flame.

"Head her to the land," shouted the captain to John.

"Ay, ay, Sir," cried John out of the smoke.

"How far away is the shore?" called the captain.

"Seven miles, Sir," came John's steady voice.

"Put on every ounce of steam," ordered the captain to the engineer.

The vessel ploughed along faster than before, while the smoke wrapped up the wheel-house, and the flames burst out of the cabin windows. The captain, midway between the passengers and the fire, called with his trumpet, "Two minutes more, John."

"Ay, ay, Sir," John was heard replying, though his voice was thick with the smoke.

"Can you hold on, John?"

"By God's help, I will," that was what the pilot said while the thick smoke was beating on him and the flames were blistering him.

There was time to fly, the deck was clear, the pilot could soon have rushed to the other end, and taken refuge among the passengers, who were huddled together at the bows, like sheep. *He had a wife and happy children whom he loved. Should he leave the wheel and let the ship drift? No! though the fire*

was singeing and blistering, he would stay at his post, run the vessel on shore, and save the passengers. Once more the captain stands forward, and calls out almost pitifully, "John, a minute longer."

One hand was burnt to a black stump, and the spokes of the wheel were blazing, yet John refused to move, and once more his voice was heard thick and muffled, "Ay, ay, Sir."

"God bless you," shouted back the captain.

Another minute, and the ship ran aground, and the passengers crowded up on the shore. But John Maynard was no more. The charred deck on which he was standing fell into the hot fires below, and the brave pilot fell with it.

Did one ever die for the sake of an enemy? Young Sutherland died for his companions and John Maynard died in doing his duty. I have

only heard of One who died for His enemies. That was Jesus. Come and let us see it. They have got Him out of the city now. There is a hole ready made in the ground. There is a wooden cross lying near the hole. They are laying Him upon it.



"Bring the hammer," says a soldier. What are they going to do? They will only cord His feet and wrists to the cross, surely they will not nail Him on—that is too cruel. "Bring the hammer," says the soldier again. "Here's a spike large enough," says another, throwing an immense nail. O the doleful sounds! Hark, how the nails are crushing through his hands! hark, how the spike is being hammered into His feet! It is done now. They are lifting up the cross, and Him upon it—four or five of them. There! they let it drop into the hole. What a quiver goes through the Sufferer as His body is shaken, and the nails tear His hands and feet!

"Look! look!—if you can bear it—

Look at your dying Lord!

Stand near the Cross and watch Him:

'Behold the Lamb of God.'



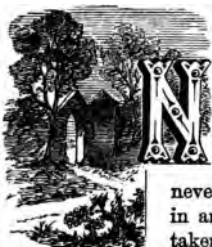
*Looking at the Body.*

- "His hands and feet are pierced,  
He cannot hide His face:  
And cruel men 'stood staring,'  
In awe, about the place.
- "They laugh at Him and mock Him!  
They tell Him to 'come down,'  
And leave that Cross of suffering,  
And change it for a crown.
- "Why did He hear their mockings?  
Was He 'the mighty God?'"  
And would He have destroy'd them  
With one almighty word?
- "Yes, Jesus could have done it;  
But let me tell you why  
He would not use His power,  
But chose to stay and die.
- "For our sins He suffer'd,  
For our sins He died:  
And 'not for ours only,'  
But 'all the world's' beside."

It is too distressing: come away. Come again in the evening, when they are taking Him down, and Joseph is waiting to bury Him in the garden. If you had been one of those fisher-lads whom young Sutherland saved, wouldn't you have liked to see his body? Wouldn't you have gone to his mother's cottage when the blinis were drawn, and stood by his bed? Wouldn't you have looked lovingly at his hands, and perhaps have said, "Dear hands! they rescued me?" Now come to the side of the dead Saviour. Tremble softly. Look how His brow has been bleeding from the thorns: how wet and matted His hair. Take up His hands—they were nailed for you. Those feet, so sore, walked here, and were cruelly punished for you. Can I do anything for Him? It is too late. Yes, you can do one thing. You can believe it all. Should I have died for ever if it had not been for Him? Why, I have been His enemy. I did not ask Him to die: I have not thanked Him because He did: Dear Saviour, forgive me all. Let me kneel at Thy side. Let me love that heart which beat and bled for me. Amen.

## THE GREAT CHANGE, AND HOW IT IS WROUGHT.

"Repent ye, and believe the Gospel."—ST. MARK i. 15.



**N**O one can ever be forgiven without repenting.

What have you to repent of, do you ask? Have you always been gentle and obedient? Have you never been selfish or cruel? Have you never in any case told a lie? Have you never taken a little thing that you thought no one would miss? Have you never had a bad desire? never had a hard thought about God? Have you never thought it was tiresome to serve Jesus Christ, and never turned away the Holy Spirit when He made you feel serious? I will show you something else which you should repent of. Look at this poor Man. His eyes are closed in death, but the eyelashes seem still wet with tears. How wounded and sore His brows are! and His hair, how matted. Why, His hands have been bored or pierced! What is that on His side?—Blood. What is that on His feet?—Blood. This is He Who loved you. He used to think of you on the mountains at night, He was praying for you when they took Him and nailed Him up to a tree. This is my Lord Jesus Christ. O, our sin was the death of Him! He could bear it no longer; it broke His heart.

A youth is placed apprentice in a large provision-dealer's shop in one of our cities. He has lost his father, and his mother's hope is bound up in his welfare. He did well for some years, and there was never so much happiness at home as

when he came down at Christmas and unwrapped the mysterious little parcels, which contained presents for his sisters. But he got wrong. He began to study racing news, and to learn what a "tip" meant. He knew the latest comic song at the concert halls. He drank and he smoked. To keep this up, his wages, as a young assistant, were not enough, and more than once he had robbed the till, intending some time to return the money. One morning he put half a sovereign in his pocket which had been marked without his knowing it. He was wanted shortly after in the counting-house. His employer looked very serious, and a stranger with a moustache stood at his side.

"Gray," said his master, "have you any gold about you?"

"No, Sir," replied the young man, colouring, and looking confused.

"I am afraid you have," put in the stranger. "To tell the truth, I am detective Cooper, and if you do not produce what money you have I must search you."

The theft was discovered, the half sovereign which they had marked was found. Tears, cries, do not spare him, and he is taken to the borough gaol. At the next sessions he is tried. The jury say, "Guilty." A lady in black, sitting in the gallery, faints. It is the prisoner's mother. Sentence of twelve months' imprisonment is passed. The mother never recovers from that shock. One of the warders in the gaol brings to the prisoner a black-bordered envelope containing a letter from his sister Maggie. Among other things the letter says:—"Dear mother died to-day. Almost her last words were, 'My poor Charlie! God forgive Charlie!'" Soon after the prisoner was released, he made his way to the village where his mother had lived. If you had been in the village churchyard one summer evening, when the light was going out in the west, and the shadows were gathering under the beech-trees, you might have seen a young man open the gate quietly, and then walk up quickly to a certain grave. There he stood, reading the inscription on the small head-stone, part of which had been lately cut. He threw off his cap, he held his head, as if to press down some burning weight, and the tears trickled through his fingers. He murmured, "My poor mother, I killed her. O that I could speak to her, and ask her to forgive me! God pardon me!"

In like manner, children, I ask you to stand at the grave of the Lord Jesus. His last words were about you: "Forgive them," He said. Are you not sorry? do you not repent that you caused His death?

But you must do something more than *repent*. You must *believe*. Are you to believe that Jesus was the Son of God? The wicked believe that and perish. Are you to believe that Christ was put to death on the cross for the sins of the world? Satan himself is aware of that, and more than that. Believe then,—

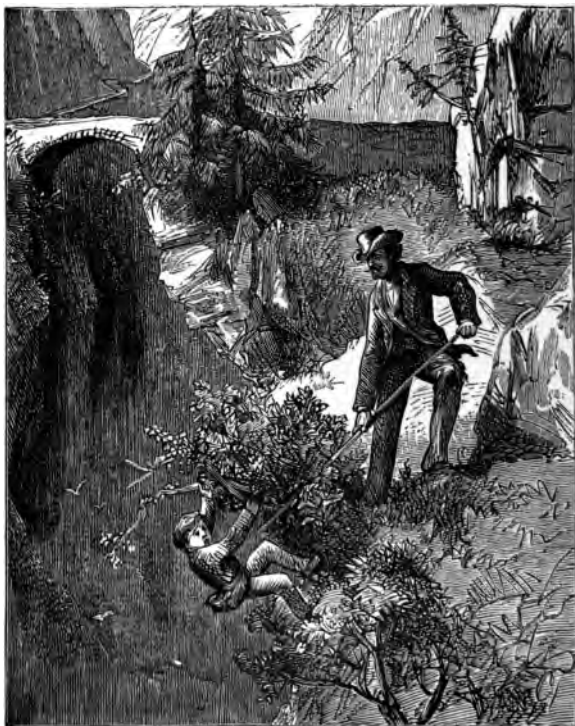
*That Christ is able and willing to save you.*—Did I say Jesus was able to save? Yes. His arm is strong enough to tear you away from the sins of which you are fondest. That child is always quarrelsome and angry, but Jesus can make him kind and gentle. That girl is proud and showy, but Jesus could make her so humble that she could pull out her earrings and throw away her necklace. That boy is fond of filthy talking and filthy reading, but Jesus could make his heart cleaner than a snowflake.

A quiet and gentle, but fine, tall engineer, named John Routledge, was working at Cordova when the revolution happened in Spain. During a battle near Cordova, Routledge was watching the fight until he saw soldiers dropping down wounded. The sight touched his heart, and rushing into the ranks he lifted up the bleeding and suffering men as if they had been infants, and carried them away to the nurses, where they could be attended to. The bullets whistled past him, and men fell on every side, but still the noble Englishman kept snatching up the wounded with the tenderness of a mother and the strength of a giant. Children, you are all engaged in a fight, with your own hearts, and wicked companions, and Satan for your enemies. Some of you have fallen. Sins are too much for you, habits are too strong. But Jesus comes, the strong, the tender. He is able to save. He will draw you away beyond the reach of the enemy. The hoof of sin shall not crush you. No cruel habit shall ride over you. Christ can heal and deliver.

He is *willing* to save, did I say? Yes. At Hastings, the other day, when people were bathing, a cry was raised, "A lady has sunk." A gentleman threw off his hat and boots, plunged into the sea, and held up the poor exhausted woman

until help came, and she was rescued. That was what a stranger did! Your mother, when you were an infant, flew to your side when she heard your faintest call. God is your Father. Could you cry for Him without His hearing you? Could your soul be in peril and He not be anxious? O, He is willing to save!

“A father and his son were journeying on foot through a

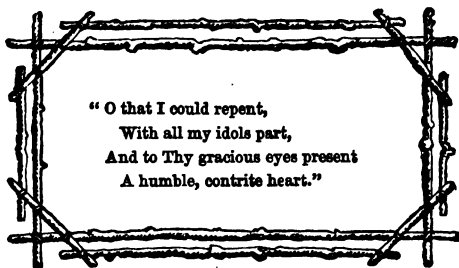


*mountain-pass among the Alps. They were gathering the lovely flowers which grow there in such profusion. The*

father carried a long pole, with a strong iron hook at the end of it, which he used for drawing to him the shrubs and flowers that were beyond his reach. The boy's fancy was caught by a bunch of gay flowers which he earnestly longed to have. He thoughtlessly rushed down a grassy slope to reach them, but his foot slid on the smooth, slippery turf; he fell, rolled down, and caught desperately by some low bushes growing near the edge of the precipice. The boy was clinging to the shrubs, with his head covered by their thick foliage, a little way down the steep bank, on the edge of a frightful precipice, over which, if he had fallen, he must have been dashed in pieces. He was beyond the reach of his father's arm, yet there was a way of saving him. He was dressed, as travellers in the Alps often are, in a linen blouse, girt with a strong leather belt. His father knew the belt was strong, he had buckled it round his son with his own hands. He fixed the iron hook at the end of the staff which he carried, firmly into the belt; but before the boy could be drawn up, he must let go the shrubs to which he was clinging. He could not see his father, he did not feel how he held him, he only heard his voice, saying, 'Let go the bushes, my boy, and I will save you!' It seemed like letting go his only security; but trusting altogether to his father's word, he loosed his hold, and was soon drawn up safely, and clasped in his father's arms. Immediately, the bushes to which he had been clinging, whose roots had been gradually loosening with his weight, fell crashing down the precipice."

This boy believed his father was both *able* and *willing* to save him, and he gave up his hold upon the bushes while he still hung over the rock. So let every boy and girl before me unloose the sins which they have been clinging to. Is it pride?—let it go. Is it anger or cruelty?—let it go. You may tremble to do it, you may shrink from doing it, but O, the peace, the joy, that shall follow. Do you want Jesus? do you long for Jesus? will you leave your sins for Jesus? Then you may trust yourself to Him. You may believe He forgives you, and that *now*, without waiting longer, He actually lifts you up and saves you! Are there tears in your eyes? There are in His. Is there any warmth in your heart towards Him? His heart swells with affection to you. Tear for tear, love for love, *anxiety* for anxiety. God is reconciled.

This is how a poor sin-stained child becomes washed. This is the change of heart. This is conversion. It is the greatest change which ever happens. Clay is dirty, clay is common, but when it is crystallized it becomes a precious, glittering stone, a ruby or sapphire. Charcoal is black, it will soil your fingers, but a diamond that flashes is only charcoal purified. But the change that makes a brilliant out of clay, the change that makes a painted butterfly out of a hard black grub, is not so great as the change of heart. Who is this, kneeling before God's throne in heaven, with love in her eyes and light beaming about her face such as never shone from diamond or sapphire? It is that dear girl who played and laughed with you, whose death-bed you stood by, and whose pious words you caught. Commit yourselves to Jesus as she did, trust the Saviour as she did, and her rest and heaven shall be yours. Amen.



"O that I could repent,  
With all my idols part,  
And to Thy gracious eyes present  
A humble, contrite heart."

## JESUS OUR TEACHER.

"We know that Thou art a Teacher come from God."—ST. JOHN iii. 2.



HERE are teachers in the world besides those who sit in Sunday-school, or stand up with an arithmetic in their hands in day-school, or go out with the "boarders."

The smallest boy and the youngest girl here are teachers. That girl who refused to divide her orange with her sister was teaching at the time. She was teaching selfishness. That boy who struck at his companion outside the school, because he rose above him in class, taught those who looked on. He taught them what revenge was, and what anger was. The birds that sing, the lilies that grow, the ox that ploughs, all give lessons. The Rev. John Pulsford was studying hard and praying earnestly one day, when a bird hopped to his study window, and seemed to say, "God cares for me; think He cares not for you; why so troubled?" and the student felt his brain rested and his heart comforted. Are we idle? then we are told to "go to the ant," and let him give us a lesson. Do we refuse to come to God? then we may well think of the ox, who "knoweth his owner," and the horse that trots back into the warm stable, and neighs while you pour out the oats for him. There are very few of you who have not heard how King Bruce felt his courage rise as he saw the spider, after many failures, climb up to the ceiling. That is an old story, too, which tells how Park, the African traveller, lying



faint and thirsty, took heart at sight of a little moss-plant thriving on the sand at his feet. A raven ministered to the great prophet Elijah, and a gourd was the teacher of Jonah.

But the best Teacher the world has had or shall have is Jesus Christ. Matthew says He "sat daily teaching in the temple." Mark says He "began teaching many things." How you and I would have liked to sit on the warm beach at the Sea of Galilee in the summer evenings, when Jesus was standing up in Peter's boat, holding the mast with one hand while He was teaching the crowd that spread far along the shore. I don't think we should have picked up shells and thrown them at each other, or been making fortifications out of the sand; we should have been too much pleased with the sermon to do those things. Jesus says, "Learn of Me." Why should He ask us to be His scholars?

#### I. BECAUSE HE IS CLEVER ENOUGH TO TEACH.

All teachers are not clever. There are some scholars who ought to be teaching, and some teachers who ought to be scholars. Every day, I suppose, girls come home from school and say, "Miss — is not well up in arithmetic; she can scarcely ever correct my sums without going to the desk and looking at the 'key.'" Now, do not think that I would put away all Sunday-school teachers who do not know much of arithmetic and geography and history. Many teachers who do not know how large is Palestine, know much about the largeness of the love of Jesus, and that is better. If your teacher could not be certain how far it was from Jerusalem to Bethany, be satisfied if he could make you feel how far you are from God. Love a good man, take your hat off to a good man, be willing to learn from a good man, though you can beat him at arithmetic, and help him out with Scripture names. My sister came to me the other day quite triumphant, because she thought she had corrected her teacher on a point of grammar, and told me, "I am sure she was wrong." No one ever came away from one of Jesus' lessons and said, "I've proved Him wrong." When Jesus' scholars had had a lesson, they asked people all in a breath, "Who taught Him? has He had lessons from the



*Mother Teaching Children.*

scribe? has He been to Jerusalem?" O! Jesus is clever enough to teach. You boys who go to day-school think you know something of history. Not so much as Jesus, for He watched the building of the tower of Babel and the siege of Paris. You know something about astronomy. Not so much as Jesus, for the heavens are "the work of His fingers," and He does what you cannot do with the largest telescope: He counts the stars. You can draw and paint. Not so well as Jesus, for He paints the sunrise and sunset, and tints the flowers. Can any build? Not so well as Jesus, for He built the earth, and put the limestone on the granite, and the coal on the limestone, and the clay on the coal, and the soil on the clay. Jesus is wonderfully learned. You read in your Bibles, Sunday after Sunday, "Jesus said" such and such things. O! when you come to those words, be hushed, be attentive, for He is speaking Who is the wisest and noblest Teacher in the world.

## II. HE IS HOLY ENOUGH TO TEACH.

You don't like to see your teacher do what is wrong. You do not like to meet him rambling out in the fields on Sunday night when he ought to be in church, although you are doing likewise. Teacher should be better than his scholars, as well as cleverer. Boy stops the Superintendent one afternoon when he is coming out of school.

"Please, Sir, I don't like my teacher."

"Why, my boy?"

"Well, Sir, I don't like him."

"You have a reason for not liking him; what is it?"

"Sir, if I must tell the truth, I saw our teacher having a glass in the 'Lion' last night, and I don't think he's good."

Jesus, the great Teacher, was holy. He was good when He was young. No one ever came to His father, and said, "I have to complain of your Son Jesus; He threw at my horse and lamed it; and He has broken into my vineyard, and stolen the best bunches of grapes." And when Jesus grew to manhood, nobody ever said to Him, "Don't be in a passion; don't swear;" for He was never angry, and never profane. He not

only told people to be generous, and just, and forgiving, but He was generous, just, and forgiving Himself. He said to men, "Bless them that curse you." And having commanded us to do that, He did it Himself. When He was fastened to the cross, with red blood trickling down His white face, with the spiked thorns all round His head, so that He could not move without a fresh wound, with the nails hanging out of the sores in His hands and feet, with His great heart throbbing as if it would leap out of His breast, feeling as if He could only groan and die,—then, looking down on the men who had crucified Him, and who were looking up from their game of dice and cursing Him, He cried out, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." Yes, Jesus blessed those that cursed Him. He is a holy Teacher.

### III. HE IS LOVING ENOUGH TO TEACH.

Some teachers are not very loving. Their language is, "Do this," "Read that." They use up a Bible more in beating boys than in thumbing it. You know well that all teachers are not of this character. Your teacher is kind. He slaps you, not with his hands, but with his eyes; and you would almost as soon have a blow as one of his sad, reproachful looks. If you stay away from school, you know he will shortly be at your house inquiring for you. If you are sick, he sits by your side and talks of the Saviour. Mr. Newman Hall relates this story:—

"A friend who is with me has been telling me of a class of little boys he teaches at Philadelphia on Sunday nights. One evening, a newspaper boy met him in the street, and said, 'O, captain! I'm mighty glad to see ye. There's poor Billy —, he's so badly, and so wants to see ye.'

"My friend went with the little boy, and found Billy lying on some rags in the corner of a wretched room, very ill. Billy was so delighted when the captain went in! The room was dark, and Billy, with a feeble voice, said, 'I see here, captain! I'm mighty glad to see ye.'

"My friend was filled with pity for him, and asked if he could send him a nurse, or some medicine, or some nice food.

"No, captain, it wasn't that I wanted ye for; I wanted to ax ye two questions. The first is, Did you tell us the other night as how Jesus Christ died for every feller?"

"Yes, I did; for Jesus Christ tasted death for every man."

"Billy then said, 'I thought so. Now I've another question. Did you tell us as how Jesus Christ saves every feller that axes Him?'"

"Yes," said my friend; "for every one that asketh receiveth."

"Billy replied with a very feeble but happy voice, 'Then I know that He saves me, because I axes Him.'"

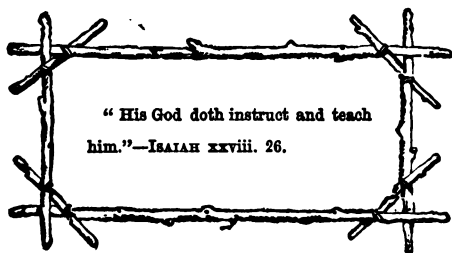
"My friend paused to wipe away the tears that gushed from his eyes, and then bent down to speak to the boy. But Billy's head had dropped back on the pillow of rags, and his happy spirit had gone to Jesus."

Jesus is the most loving Teacher you will ever have. When you are ill, Jesus will be there before the doctor, and stay later than the nurse. When others say to you, "I will punish," Jesus says, "I will forgive." When others say, "Away from my sight," Jesus says, "Come unto Me." The tear seems sometimes to stand in your teacher's eye, but Jesus fairly broke down and wept about our sin. Yes, Jesus is loving enough to teach.

#### IV. HE IS PATIENT ENOUGH TO TEACH.

We came twelve months ago to our classes, and said, "That boy will give way to Jesus;" or, "I am very hopeful about that girl." Last Sunday, we saw that boy strolling out with some low companions, and that girl going to the bad. We say, "Lord, give us patience, or we shall leave our classes." Why go on making marks on your souls when you rub them out every week? Patience, teachers. Missionaries are patient. Moffat prayed and wept for many years near the Orange River, and said, "I have done nothing;" and just then Africaner, a savage chief, whose hands had committed many murders, gave way to Jesus. But Jesus is the most patient of all teachers. He began to teach Peter, and Peter began to swear; Jesus went on teaching, and Peter began to weep and

pray. Ah! children, if you lose us, you will not lose Jesus. If we tire of teaching you, Jesus will not be tired. We cannot bear so many disappointments, but Jesus can. You disappointed Jesus last year when you would not give your heart to Him, but He is still here, waiting and loving. If you listen not to us, you will listen to Him, the wise, holy, loving, patient Teacher. Precious Jesus!



## HEAVEN

"I go to prepare a place for you."—*St. JOHN xiv. 2.*



SOME children dialike to talk about heaven. They fancy, I believe, that it will be nothing nice—nothing for *them*. Or they imagine that if anybody thinks much about heaven, it is because they are going there at once. What foolish notions! If your father told you he was going to Australia within a few years, as soon as he could save enough money, you would soon read and talk about the place. And because you read and thought about Australia, it would not make you start any earlier. You may read, and talk, and wonder about heaven, but you will not go until Jesus wants you, and you have done His work here. Now I hope you are more satisfied, and that you will be glad to hear something of heaven. The first thing I want to say is that,—

#### I. HEAVEN IS A PLACE MADE READY FOR US.'

Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you." Christ, before He took His friends to heaven, went to prepare their places. I will tell you why Jesus can do better for you in making preparation than even your parents. Jesus was a child. Your father, and mother, and I have been children. But we forget much of what we felt and wanted when we were children. Jesus forgets nothing. He feels now, whenever a child goes up to heaven, just as He used to feel when He was

at home at Nazareth. He knows what to get for a boy or a girl, and you shall find it all ready for you—just at your hand. Jesus knows all the longings and desires of men and women; whether you go up when children, or when you are men and women, you will find heaven will be a place made ready for you.

## II. HEAVEN IS A PLACE TO BE ENJOYED.

In heaven we shall be happy. How full of joy those children are who are just going to heaven. A Sunday-scholar was dying some years ago. A few of us were gathered in his room. "I shall meet you in heaven, shan't I?" he said. And as he said it he lifted up his thin arm, and held it up, as if he expected Jesus would take hold of it and draw him away there and then. His face was a picture. He smiled till the smiles seemed to dip into each other, and all parts of his face were lighted up.

A poor boy lay in a hospital in India. A lady who had visited him every day came to his bedside.

"Do you know what I've been thinking of all the morning?" said the sufferer.

"Of how soon you will see Jesus! is that it?" replied the lady.

"Yes. I've been thinking I began this Sunday a poor sick boy in the hospital, surrounded by wicked men and sinful talk; and I think I shall be at home before night. I think I've begun a Sunday that will never end."

The evening came, and the visitor was there again. The boy was sinking, and the lady whispered to him, "'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me.' Is Jesus with you, dear?"

"O, yes!"

"Have you any fear?"

"No, none; I have been wondering why they call it a dark valley. I have found the light growing brighter ever since I believed; and now it's so bright I must shut my eyes."

The boy put his hands together and prayed, after which he said, "That is my last prayer; and now it shall only be praise for ever and ever."

Now, do you think that Christ would make you feel before



you go that heaven is delightful, and then, when you reach it, disappoint you, so that you would not care about the place? Never! Whoever disappoints, Jesus does not.

We are only happy here by denying ourselves. But in heaven we shall be happy, in a certain sense, in enjoying ourselves. Let me explain this. While you are here, it will not do for you to work too much, will it? We cannot read as much as we like, or study as much as we like, because we should bring illness upon us. If we are to be happy, we must not indulge ourselves in many things. But in heaven it will be all different. There you can walk without being tired, and fly without being weary. There you shall read without your eyes growing dim, and think without an aching head.

O! the beauty of heaven! "Dreams cannot picture a world so fair." In the still forests of the sunny south there are large plants that burst from a bud to a flower with a noise that is heard for miles. Their scent fills the air far and wide, and men take long journeys to see them. There shall be grander flowers in heaven. There will be palms more feathery, and cedars more spreading, than any on earth.

In London, not a few girls get their living by selling flowers. Listen to the story which one of them told:—

"Well, Sir, I wakes the children in the mornin'. And we says our prayers and goes to Common Garding (Covent Garden.) It's mostly flowers we sticks to. I buy whatever's in. Wi'lets comes in twice a year. Sometimes 'tis primroses, and sometimes 'tis roses, and lilies o' the walley. Some o' the city gents as fancies themselves swells, are very fond o' stickin' the lily o' the walley in their button-'oles. We gives a penny a bunch at the market, and then we splits 'em up inter two or three, and sells 'em at a penny or a 'a-penny, accordin' to chances. It's 'ard work havin' to look arter children. Dick 'll go wrong, I'm afeard, if he keeps in the streets; and so 'll 'Arriet. They both minds me now."

That girl may die in the garret where she lived, die in the dirt and darkness. But her soul will go up, above St. Paul's, above the clouds, beyond to heaven. What a change! The poor child never saw the violets and the primroses which she used to "freshen up," growing. But in heaven she may walk

beside the sunny violet banks, and through the mossy primrose glades! Do not you think she will be happy?



*The Flower Girl.*

There will be work in heaven, of course. St Paul, and John Wesley, and George Whitefield may still preach; why should we doubt it? and you and I may hear them. Do you like history? Then I can almost promise you shall learn that. Do you like astronomy? Then I believe you shall understand all about the far-off worlds, with a Greater than Herschel or Sir Isaac Newton for teacher. "Heaven is a place to be enjoyed." Do not you think so? It is—

"Where the faded flower shall freshen—  
Freshen never more to fade;  
Where the shaded sky shall brighten—  
Brighten never more to shade;

"Where the sun-blaze never scorches ;  
Where the star-beams cease to chill ;  
Where no tempest stirs the echoes  
Of the wave, or wood, or hill....

"Where the bond is never sever'd—  
Partings, claspings, sob and mean,  
Midnight waking, twilight weeping,  
Heavy neontide—all are done.

"Where the child has found its mother ;  
Where the mother finds the child ;  
Where dear families are gather'd  
That were scatter'd on the wild....

"Where we find the joy of loving  
As we never loved before—  
Loving on, unchill'd, unhinder'd,  
Loving once, for evermore."

### III. HEAVEN IS OUR HOME.

Home is where our dear ones are. "A little boy, four or five years old, was returning from school one day. He bounded into the house, exclaiming as he hung his hat up, 'This is my home! This is my home! This is my home!'"

A lady, on a visit to his mother, was sitting in the parlour. She said to him, "Willie, the house next door is just the same as this. Suppose you go in there and hang up your cap, wouldn't *that* be your home as much as this?"

"No, ma'am," said Willie, very earnestly, "it would not."

"Why not?" asked the lady. "What makes this house your home more than that?"

Willie had never thought of this before. But, after a moment's pause, he ran up to his mother, and, throwing his arms around her neck, he said, "Because my mother lives here."

The dearest Friend you and I have got, is in heaven. I mean Jesus. He died instead of us. If we get to heaven, He will bring us. He is father, brother—everything to us. O! the joy of seeing Him for the first time! When He takes your hand inside His, and you look down at it, you will see the marks of the nails that fastened Him up. If you ever shed a tear in heaven, it must be then. But He "shall wipe away all tears." After that, we shall be used to look at Him.

"Why do you call heaven your home?" asked a teacher of a little boy who was very ill.

"Because Jesus is there."

"But suppose Jesus should go out of heaven," replied the teacher.

"Then I would go out with Him," said the boy.

Yes, heaven would be a home, a beautiful home, if we knew no one but Jesus. But there will be our friends. Which of us has not a father, or mother, or sister, or brother in heaven? To those who are righteous, God raises up friends, so that they may never be without some one they may love and cling to, either here or above. Many children are quite orphans,—their father, mother, brothers and sisters all gone!

When the yellow fever was raging in New Orleans, a gentleman found a little fellow lying on the grass not far from one of the outside streets. There was a light in the boy's eye, and a redness on his cheek, that ought not to have been there. The gentleman shook him by the shoulder, and asked what he was doing there.

"Waiting for God to come to me," said the boy, tenderly, and looked up into the hot sky with longing eyes.

"What do you mean, my child?"

"God sent for mother, and father, and little brother, and took them away to His home up in the sky; and mother told me when she was sick, that God would take care of me. I have no home, nobody to give me anything, and so I came out here, and have been looking so long up in the sky for God to come and take care of me, as mother said He would. He will come, won't He? Mother never told me a lie?"

What a meeting that shall be, when the last child of a family has been caught up by the angels to join all the rest in heaven! Suppose you are that child, my boy; they shall wave their hands when you are coming in sight. They will all want to embrace you at once. A sister shall lay her head on your shoulder, and a brother put his arm in yours. Father and mother will look on with a joy almost too big for words, and in this way you may walk to Jesus.

"We have brought our last child, dear Lord," your father may say. "None of us can praise Thee enough for Thy mercy in bringing to us this last wandering boy." Then

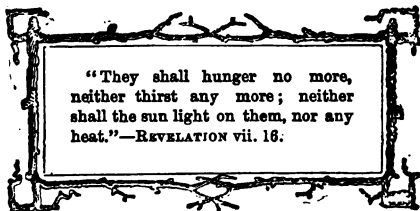
Jesus shall smile, and make you welcome, and above and around you may hear sweet angel music.

"What is that?" you may ask.

"A new hymn, sung because you have joined us," you may be told.

Will it not be too much for you? No more partings! No more pains! No more sorrows!

At Christmas, families meet here. But you look round, and there is no chair put for a brother you had last Christmas. He is gone! Another Christmas may come, and then you miss the sister you were so fond of. Gone too! There will be nothing like that in heaven. There will be new feasts, new carols, new gladness, but the old faces. Yes, for ever! *Heaven is our home.* A happier home, a grander home, a more lasting home than any on earth. Children, you are all invited. Be willing to go through Christ Who is the Way, leaving behind your sins, and God in His love shall lead you there. Amen.



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